THE DYNAMICS OF SYMBOLIC FORMATION

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PREFACE

Before anything else I must offer my thanks to God and to all the people who have made it possible for me to experience the stimulation of thought and satisfaction of accomplishment which this project has brought to me. It was the imagination and friendship of Wayne Rood which captivated my interest in the possibility of a doctoral program, and his assistance was particularly vital in the early stages of this dissertation -- in defining the task and beginning the research. The perceptive and lucid observations of Charles McCoy were most helpful in cutting through to fundamental issues and in giving shape and clarity to the developing project. His warm support kept me going through the long hours of formulation and writing. In the midst of intense demands on his time Robert Bellah gave careful attention to the first draft of my work and offered detailed and provocative criticisms which broke open new paths of thought. His competence both in the works of Erikson and in the field of symbols is amazing indeed.

To complete a project like this when a person has the responsibility for five children would normally be very difficult. My children, however, were most willing and cooperative about the changes which the demands of this project required for their lives. They were game to make the most of the adjustments and even showed interest in my progress. Most of the thanks, however, must be reserved for my long-suffering and gracious wife, Dorothy. Not only has she assumed more than her share of family responsibility and made great sacrifices in pursuing her own life and interests, but she also typed the first draft, the revisions and the final copy of this dissertation. It is to her that I am indebted for the high quality of this completed edition. Her love and encouragement have enriched my experience not only during this project but for twenty-two years of life together.

The documentation of this paper requires one note here. The research relies heavily on the work of Erik H. Erikson, so those of his works which are referred to most frequently in the footnotes have been abbreviated as follows:

CS -- Childhood and Society
GT -- Gandhi's Truth
IR -- Insight and Responsibility
IYC -- Identity: Youth and Crisis
ORM -- "The Ontogeny of Ritualization in Man"
YML -- Young Man Luther

A brief preview of the direction of the dissertation from section to section is given on pages seven through nine. It should help the reader locate those sections of the work which are most interesting to him.

One note on the form of the paper may also be helpful. A row of three asterisks will be used in Chapters VI, VII, and VIII to divide the exposition of Erikson's developmental dynamics from the application of that dynamics to the process of symbolic formation. That application continues until the next heading.

Herman Diers
Waverly, Iowa
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INTRODUCTION

A. The Setting for the Study

The story is told of the Irish immigrant mother whose son interrupted his play one day to ask her what is underneath the world to hold it up.

"Sure, and there's a rock that holds the world up, my boy," she replied.

The boy returned to his play for a time, but soon came back to the kitchen, still puzzled. "But what is it that holds up the rock that holds the world up?" he wondered.

Patient teacher that she was, she responded, "Sure, son, and there's another rock that holds up the rock that holds the world up."

"But, Mom," pressed the boy, "what holds up that rock?"

Completely equal to the situation, the mother concluded the interrogation by announcing, "That rock, my boy, goes all the way down."

In this dissertation I propose to investigate the process by which symbols are formed. If, as is assumed here, it is symbols which cosmicize the world, giving order to it and making sense of it for man, then the questions being asked here are very much like those of the boy who asked what it is that holds the world up, and the answers leave us in much the same position as the mother. The issue probes the most elemental aspects of human existence -- what is holding up our cosmos? And no answer is adequate unless it goes "all the way down."

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The centrality of symbolization for human life and thought is a basic theme running through current investigations in a wide range of academic disciplines. Michael Polanyi[1] and Thomas Kuhn[2] use it in their work in physical sciences, Marshall McLuhan in the mass media,[3] Carl Jung[4] and Jacques Lacan[5] in psychoanalysis, Robert Bellah in sociology,[6] Susanne Langer[7] and Paul Ricoeur[8] in philosophy, Levi-Strauss in anthropology,[9] and Joseph Campbell in mythology.[10]

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[1] Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958); Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1967).

[2] Thomas S. Kuhn. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (2d ed.; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970).

[3] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Mass Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965).

[4] Carl G. Jung, *Man and His Symbols* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1969; Carl G. Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner, and Co., Ltd., 1933); Carl G. Jung, *Psychology and Religion* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1938).

[5] Jacques Lacan, "The Function of Language in Psychoanalysis," in *The Language of the Self* by Anthony Wilden (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1968).

[6] Robert N. Bellah, *Beyond Belief* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1970).

[7] Susanne K. Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite and Art*. (3d ed.; Cambridge: Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1957).

[8] Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, translated by Emerson Buchanan, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969); Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, translated by Denis Savage (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1970).

[9] Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked: An Introduction to a Science of Mythology* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1969).

[10] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Cleveland, Ohio: World Publishing Company, 1956); Joseph Campbell, *The Masks of God* (4 vols.; New York: Viking Press, Inc., 1959-1968).

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The most comprehensive theoretic grounding for the "movement" was established by Ernst Cassirer. In the three volumes of The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms[1] Cassirer described how human consciousness is evoked and shaped by symbolic forms.

Some groundwork has also been laid in theology for participation in this "Age of Symbolization." Paul Tillich[2] and H. Richard Niebuhr[3] both affirmed the basic role of symbols in religion. Gerardus van der Leeuw[4] and Mircea Eliade[5] took a phenomenological approach and gave a panoramic description of the rich heritage of symbols in man's religious history. Paul Ricoeur, as a philosopher of religion, indicated that it is symbolic configurations which have oriented man in the world.[6]

All of this is culminating in a way of doing theology identified by Robert Bellah as "symbolic realism"[7] and by Lonnie D. Kliever as

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[1] Ernst Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955 [Vols. I and II] and 1957 [Vol. III]), III, 138.

[2] Paul Tillich, Dynamics of Faith (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1958); Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, Vol. I (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951); Paul Tillich, "The Religious Symbol" in Symbolism in Religion and Literature, ed. Rollo May (New York: George Braziller, 1961), pp. 75-98.

[3] H. Richard Niebuhr, The Meaning of Revelation (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1970); The Responsible Self (New York: Harper, 1963).

[4] Gerardus van der Leeuw, Religion in Essence and Manifestation, trans. J. E. Turner (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1963).

[5] Mircea Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion, trans. Willard Trask (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1968); Mircea Eliade, Images and Symbols, trans. by Philip Mairet (New York: Sheed and Ward, Inc., 1969); Mircea Eliade, Myth and Reality (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1963).

[6] Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil.

[7] Bellah, Beyond Belief, p. 251.

"symbolic formism."[1] It is based on "the acceptance of symbolization as the single ordering principle of human knowing, doing, and feeling."[2] Symbols orient man in his world, establish the basis for significance and understanding, and define what man means by "reality."

This approach appears promising in theology because it offers a way of breaking beyond the impasse of literalism (as found both in older orthodoxy and in newer linguistic analysis) and beyond the subject-object dichotomy which has dominated Western thought.[3] In a pluralistic world it opens a way by which the integrity of alternate symbolic configurations can be respected without denying the uniqueness, the validity, the power, and the significance which each of them holds for those who have been formed by them. Finally, this procedure suggests a way in which significance and identity is established not only within formal religions but also outside of them in what they call the "secular" world.

B. The Purpose for this Study

In this study it is my intention to make a contribution to the task of "symbolic realism." In my judgment, the works cited in the previous section have established an effective case for a symbolic approach to reality, especially with regard to their emphasis on the capacity of symbols for orienting men in the world.

I propose to make an inquiry into how these symbols are formed.

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[1] Lonnie D. Kliever, "Alternative Conceptions of Religion as a Symbol System," a paper delivered at the 1970 annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion in New York and published in the Union Seminary Quarterly Review, (Winter, 1972), p. 100.

[2] Ibid., p. 92.

[3] Bellah, Beyond Belief, p. 252.

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If such symbols are the keys to what man calls "reality," then the probing of their mysterious origins and development takes a person to the primal dimensions of life, to the same order of questions as "What holds the world up?" and "How was the world made?" and "Where do babies come from?" Those are not questions arising from idle curiosity. Everything depends on them. To know more about the process by which symbols are formed, for example, may offer considerable light in understanding why some symbols are more powerful than others and why we are more likely to call some symbols "authentic" and others "inadequate." It may even shed some light on what we mean by "reality" and by "illusion."

At the same time, precisely because the question deals with such elemental things, the process of investigation is a precarious one. To explore the origins of the symbols which shape our "reality" is like looking over the edge of the world to see what is underneath. Any conclusions must necessarily be offered in a most tentative and modest way. Furthermore, this project must be regarded as only one of a whole series of explorations which need to be made from many directions if we are to begin to have some understanding of this womb of our consciousness.

Cassirer has offered the most comprehensive study of symbolic formation in his three volumes on The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms. This has been the single most influential work in my own approach to symbolic realism. Yet, I believe that we need to press beyond even that exhaustive study for two reasons: (1) his symbolic forms culminate in mathematical, precise, and absolute forms rather than in the multivalent forms of darker hues and heavier textures which are required to orient man in the world; and (2) a model which gives greater weight to the physiological demands and the complexities of social interaction holds possibilities for enriching symbolic formation and for establishing a more integral relation with life's vital processes.

The dynamics proposed by Erik H. Erikson for the human life cycle present a promising model for a further step in this investigation because they are grounded in physical, social, historical, and psychological aspects of life. Erikson, however, offers very few direct references to symbols. That means that before we can proceed to the dynamics of symbolic formation it will be necessary to lay some careful groundwork -- first by giving a well-founded description of what symbols are and how they function and then by demonstrating how they are related to Erikson's work.

C. The Scope of This Study

For the purposes of this study symbols will be understood as cultural objects with sufficient multivalence so that their primary function is to give form to human experience and to orient man in the world. Throughout this dissertation the term "symbols" will be used consistently according to this definition. Occasionally further support to this understanding of symbols will be given by specifically referring to them as "symbols-as-cultural-objects."

Such an understanding of symbols still includes a wide range of things. The cultural objects to which Cassirer gives particular attention are myths, ritual, art, language, and science. Parsons proposes three classes of symbols corresponding to three modes of orientation: (1) cognitive symbols, which include ideas and beliefs; (2) cathectic symbols, which are the more expressive types such as in art forms and styles, and (3) evaluative symbols, which provide value-orientation.[1] My particular interest, coming from a theological background, is in religious symbols, but the dynamic described in this dissertation has a broader application.

Symbols-as-cultural-objects have an objective quality about them. They are not limited to the people among whom they first developed but can be separated from them and passed on to others. They are transmissible.[2]

Such symbols serve the important functions of giving form to human experience and of orienting man in the world. They exercise those functions as explicit and public objects in a culture. A further aspect of their functioning is that they are also internalized by individuals within that culture. This form-giving and orienting activity of symbols for both societies and individuals will be emphasized particularly in the early parts of this dissertation in order to identify carefully the symbolic functions and to relate symbols to Erikson's work. However, it must be emphasized that the purpose of this dissertation is to focus not on the way that symbols give form to experience but rather on the way that symbols themselves are formed.

D. The Procedure for This Study

This study will proceed in three stages. Part I is a careful delineation of three primary functions of symbols. This lays the necessary groundwork for establishing the relation between Erikson's project and symbols. At the same time it provides an occasion for making another contribution to the task of symbolic realism. Drawing together these three critical functions of symbols, based on a careful exposition of leading sources in the field, brings more coherence and continuity to the key aspect of symbolic realism. These functions begin with that of "forming-giving," the basic function suggested by Cassirer (Chapter I) and then supplement Cassirer by emphasizing their life-orienting capacity (Chapter II) and their multivalent quality (Chapter III).

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[1] Talcott Parsons and Edward A. Shils, Toward a General Theory of Action (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1959), pp. 8, 21, and 163.

[2] Ibid., p. 22.

[3] Ibid.

Part II (Chapters IV and V) is the important transition to the work of Erikson. In Chapter IV the "configuration" is established as a key element in Erikson's work and one which is used as a consistent category. Chapter V explores the relation of these configurations to symbols-as-cultural-objects. The conclusion is that configurations cannot be entirely identified with symbols because they do not regularly have the crucial cultural dimension just described in Section C. However, the chapter clearly demonstrates that configurations consistently exercise the three functions of symbols as described in Part I. This gives these configurations sufficient affinity to symbols so that the dynamics by which they are formed can serve as a model for the dynamics by which symbols are formed.

Now it is possible to consider those dynamics in detail. Part III presents three different dynamic movements, each based on a careful exposition of the relevant material drawn from the full spectrum of Erikson's writings. The first dynamic (Chapter VI. "Mutual Activation") draws on the general quality of interaction to be found at every level of symbolic formation. The second (Chapter VII. "Transformational

Emergence") is based on the dynamics involved as a crisis is followed from its inception to its resolution. The identity crisis is used as the primary model. Finally (Chapter VIII. "'Standing Up' and 'Reaching Out'"), the entire life cycle including all eight stages in Erikson's scheme provides the basic structure of a dynamic with a double movement. The second of these three dynamics is one to which Erikson gives explicit and sustained attention. The others are gleaned from many sources in Erikson's work and are brought together in as clear a way as possible. Yet, they emerge clearly as Erikson's dynamics and not as foreign ideas which have been imposed on his work.

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PART I. THE SYMBOLIC FUNCTION

CHAPTER I

THE SYMBOLIC FUNCTION AS FORM-GIVING

The purpose of Part I is to identify three prominent qualities of the symbolic function and so to offer some precision to the way that the concept will be used throughout the dissertation.

The first and fundamental characteristic of the symbolic function is that it gives form to experience.

This quality of the symbolic function is treated most carefully in the work of Ernst Cassirer. He sees form-giving not only as the distinctive function of symbols but also as being the fundamental activity on which all human experience and knowing is based. Therefore, his treatment of Das Symbolische is a major epistemological position and not merely a portrayal of one aspect of a discrete group of phenomena called symbols.

This key role of the symbol in human knowledge is related to Cassirer's proposal that the symbolic is better understood as a function rather than as a substance.[1]

A. Form-giving as Fundamental to Experience

1. Indicated by visual inversions

Visual inversions are more than an interesting pastime for Cassirer. He draws on the illustration presented by Ewald Hering:

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[1] Below, pp. 18 and 19.

> I am walking along a path beneath a covering of dense foliage; for a brief space direct sunlight falls through a gap in the leaves: at the first moment I think I see a spot colored white by spilled lime, but when I look more closely, I see no more white, but only light on the grey-brown earth.[1]

Cassirer's point is that the change of the bright spot from spilled lime to a patch of sunlight can be understood as a shift in the frame of reference in which the phenomena were interpreted rather than as a correction due to inaccurate observation of the sense data received.[2] However, Hering's description of the shift in understanding came when he looked more closely, so the example is not entirely clear.

A less ambiguous instance is that of a stamp issued by the Dominion of Canada shortly after the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. The stamp bore a finely drawn likeness of the new monarch. A short time later, however, the stamp was withdrawn from circulation because the swirl of hair around her left ear could also be viewed as a demon-like face.

Here the implication is more clearly defined. What does that configuration of fine lines represent--a lock of hair or a demon whispering into the ear of the queen? The question will never be decided by a more careful scrutiny of the picture. No accumulation of data and no higher precision in sense observation will resolve the issue. That is not the order of the problem. The answer to that question will be given on the basis of the particular set of relations in which the lines are perceived--including the political attitude of the viewer toward the British Commonwealth!

The order of the problem involved here can be further elaborated through another illustration from Cassirer. He suggests that a straight line of the same length can be understood in any number of ways. In one set of relations it may be a mathematical concept, and even there its significance will vary according to which geometric model is being used. The same line will be seen quite differently if it is the demarcation line between sacred space and profane space in a mythic mode of seeing. Discovering the same line in a work of art, a person views the aesthetic contribution it makes to the painting.[1]

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[1] Ernst Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, III, 138.

[2] Ibid., p. 141.

Even to speak of it as "the same line" violates a person's sense of what he sees in each instance. Take for example the straight lines which portray the folds in the garments of "Our Lady of Guadalupe" in the painting at the shrine on the north edge of Mexico City. To lift a segment out of one of those lines and to say that this "really" is a demonstration of an axiom of Euclidean geometry would hardly do justice to the perception of the devout woman who has just crawled on her knees with her baby in her arms across the block-long approach to the shrine as an act of atonement and intercession. Her vision of the painting is established by a different set of relations.

What was first indicated here by visual inversions has now become more than a parlor game. It has pointed to a fundamental factor operating in every perception. "There is no seeing and nothing visible which does not stand in some mode of spiritual vision, of [symbolic] ideation. . . . The 'given' must always be taken in a definite aspect."[2] Every perception is received in some "aspect." It is held together in some way. There are, as it were, some delicate, invisible filaments which pull it together into a whole.

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[1] Ibid., pp. 200-201.

[2] Ibid., p. 134.

It is difficult to identify this strange network of filaments adequately. While they are not seen at all, they constitute all seeing. Cassirer uses a variety of expressions to convey this concept:

— point of reference[1]

— manner of seeing[2]

-- point of view to hold the manifold together[3]

-- character of direction[4]

-- form of vision[5]

-- direction of the vision[6]

— mode of vision[7]

-- centers of articulation[8]

In every instance, both in the illustrations given earlier and in these phrases, the attention is directed to what gives a perception its form.

This form-giving function is fundamental to the total perception. It creates the whole of the perception. The experience of "showing" the whispering demon on the Canadian stamp to a person who has not yet recognized it demonstrates the point. It never came to him gradually. He did not first make out some features of the demon-like face--ears or chin. He

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 158, 140.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 288.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 299.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 203.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 134.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 288.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 135.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 221.

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either saw it all at once or not at all. The seeing did not come from an aggregate of discreet bits of data but from a total configurational presentation which suddenly "occurred" to the viewer. A sense of the wholeness of a perception emerges from such an experience.

Whatever it is that shifts or "clicks" so that the demon suddenly appears, that magic of transformation offers a clue to what constitutes every perception. That gives it its form.

The form-giving factor becomes "visible" in these instances of visual inversion because in these occasions it is the form and not the visual content which changes. This form-giving function is what Cassirer calls the symbolic function, the key to his entire philosophy. The visual inversions have ushered us across the threshold. Now we can explore some of the corridors of thought opened to us.

2. Manifested in cultural objects

Cassirer refers to the functions and energies of formation as the "spiritual life" of man or the "spiritual principle."[1] This is for the purpose of designating this as the basic activity of the human spirit or consciousness and not for the purpose of isolating it from the material world.

In fact, it is only in the material world of objects that this form-giving function is manifest. Specifically, those objects which man has made demonstrate the fundamental activity of his spirit. "The highest objective truth that is accessible to the spirit is ultimately the form of its own activity. In the totality of its own achievements . . . the human spirit now perceives itself and reality."[1] They are the "creation of his cultural consciousness"[2] and include the full range of cultural objects--language, myth, religion, history, ethics, art, mathematics and science.[3]

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[1] Ibid., I, 114.

These are the symbolic forms. They are the embodiment of that activity of the human spirit which gives form to his experience. The concreteness of these forms is important. Any understanding of them is to be gained by beginning with them and seeking to discover what they demonstrate in their own realms of expression.

> If all culture is manifested in the creation of specific image-worlds, of specific symbolic forms, the aim of philosophy is not to go behind all these creations, but rather to understand and elucidate their basic formative principle.[4]

Cassirer insists that the philosophy of symbolic forms emerges out of careful attention to the concrete cultural objects and a recognition of what they exhibit and not out of a preconceived theory artifically imposed on them. However, each of the types of cultural objects has its own distinctive and appropriate style of expression. "None of these forms can simply be reduced to, or derived from, the others; each of them designates a particular approach, in which and through which it constitutes its own aspect of 'reality.'"[5] In recognition of the integrity of each of these forms

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[1] Ibid., p. 111.

[2] Ibid., III, 90.

[3] Ernst Cassirer, An Essay on Man (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1944), p. 68; also Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, III, 113.

[4] Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, I, 113.

[5] Ibid., p. 78.

Cassirer identifies them as distinctive modes. Each mode constitutes its own 'reality.'[1]

Each mode presents the data for its own investigation. On the basis of that data Cassirer inquires into the "conditions of its possibility," into its formative factors, into the "spiritual principle by which all its particular configurations, with all their vast empirical diversity, appear to be governed."[2] In accepting such an approach he rejects all imperialistic tendencies to claim absolute validity for any one mode and to impose its domination over the others.[3] Both psychological "explanations" and metaphysical "assumptions" originate in one of the modes and cannot be regarded as adequate because they violate the integrity of the other modes.

Cassirer does recognize something common to all of the modes in which cultural objects are found. However, this emerges from each mode when understood from within its own sphere of activity. Each one of them exercises the function of giving form to human experience. The particular configuration which each gives is different from all the others. No modal form is to be interpreted in terms of another mode. However, the specific characteristic of giving some shape to the human experience is fundamental to all of them. Myth and religion, for example, are not made identical to each other. That would violate the distinctive qualities of each. On the other hand, what the two of them do have in common is the function of offering form to human experience.[1]

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[1] Ernst Cassirer, Language and Myth, trans. Susanne K. Langer (New York: Dover Publications, 1953), pp. 11-12; also Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, I, 78, 91.

[2] Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, II, 11-12.

[3] Ibid., I, 81.

Cassirer has received recognition primarily for this specific contribution--that among the various modes each holds its distinctive character and yet all of them exercise the one common function of giving form.

3. Understood as function

What is manifest in all cultural objects is not a common content or substance but a common function of giving form. Any attempt, like that of Freud as an example, to explain the nature of man in terms of some specific content, will over-simplify the complex character of man.[2] What characterizes the human spirit is not some substantive essence but its formative activity.[3]

This function, which is what Cassirer identifies as the symbolic function, is most clearly exhibited in the cultural objects which are the creations of man's consciousness. For that reason Cassirer calls these objects symbolic forms.

Though Cassirer bases his work on what he has learned from these symbolic forms, he believes that they manifest a fundamental function of consciousness which is exercised in all experience. In one striking passage he even refers to such symbolic forms as language, art, and myth as "artificial symbols" and "arbitrary signs" in contrast to the "natural symbolism" which is exercised in every single moment of consciousness.[4]

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[1] Ibid., II, 254.

[2] Ernst Cassirer, The Myth of the State (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1946), pp. 28-29.

[3] Cassirer, An Essay on Man, p. 68.

[4] Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, I, 106-107.

Every perception and every event is itself situated in "a network of diverse relations" and offers references to other facets of experience.[1] This function of pointing beyond the immediate impression to other contents of consciousness is called representation, which is explicated on pages 41 to 44 as an important level of the form-giving function. Even more elemental levels of experience also exercise the symbolic functions by their expressive character.[2]

The important point to be made here is that the form-giving dimension of human experience is not to be understood as a substance or even as a structure but as an activity. For that reason when more precise treminology is needed in this paper, the term "symbolic function" is employed rather than "symbols." Symbols (Cassirer usually calls them "symbolic forms") are those formations of consciousness which more explicitly portray the form-giving activity which is present in all of human experience.

4. Constitutes reality

By now it is evident that the form-giving function exhibited in the visual inversions operates in every facet of consciousness. For the visual inversions any answer to the question about what was "really" offered in the perception, as of the stamp, for example, would have to depend on the particular set of relations in which it was interpreted. The form-giving function established what was "really" there in the perception.

Similarly, what a person calls "reality" in a particular situation is established by the set of relations in which he experiences it. The symbolic function is the way experience takes shape on the basis of such relations.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 106.

[2] Below, p. 34.

Each mode of symbolic functioning constitutes its own aspect of "reality."[1] Its unique configurations and style give form to experience in the way appropriate to itself. The peculiar set of relations established by that form-giving process constitutes its reality.

The same principle can be extended to include the totality of human experience. It is the symbolic function which constructs reality for the whole person and even for the entire odyssey of the human spirit.[2]

a. Priority of the symbolic function. Consequently, the symbolic forms are not a reflection of some reality that exists "out there" apart from man's knowing of it. The search for such a "thing-in-itself" is doomed to failure from the beginning because the symbolic function constitutes the reality and does not imitate or copy something that was there, as it were, prior to it.[3]

The only *a priori* that Cassirer recognizes is relation itself.[4] All experience stands in relation. Exactly which relation it is depends upon the configuration established by the form-giving or symbolic function.

The result is that it is impossible to "get behind" the formative principle of the human spirit to explain it or account for it in some way. Cassirer states it explicitly in a passage on the phenomenon of expression, which is the most elemental of formative activity:

> Here we can no longer inquire into the origin of this fact itself and seek to explain it, for any attempted solution is bound to move in a

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 78.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 91.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 111; also pp. 75, 105.

[4] *Ibid.*, III, 203.

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> circle. How can the sheer phenomenon of expression be understood by and derived from anything else which transcends it when expression is itself the vehicle which leads us to every kind of transcendence, and to all consciousness of reality?[1]

The symbolic function constitutes reality, so any attempt to account for reality is itself an exercise of the symbolic function.

b. Objectivity and the symbolic function. What happens, in this view, to objectivity? Is it possible to consider anything at all to be objective?

People from all schools of thought would agree that the "objective" is what remains constant and permanent and therefore reliable in contrast to what is fluid and variable. Cassirer reminds us that our understanding of what is objective does not remain fixed. Our ongoing experience has a way of requiring that what we regarded as constant yesterday must be modified or even transformed today because it does not accord with the unity of our experience. The "objective" is being continually remolded. "What we call objective reality changes its shape and is recreated in a new form."[2]

The "object" is not something "out there" like a dead lump waiting for us to get at it. It is not a "thing-in-itself." The object is one of the manifestations in a process of consciousness that becomes increasingly aware of those relations which give form to experience. Any "object" or any "objective" frame of reference is constituted by a set of relations.[3]

The concepts which express these relations are themselves not fixed. They are continually subject to revision and even abandonment in favor of more adequate concepts. What does remain constant is the process itself.

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[1] Ibid., p. 92.

[2] Ibid., II, 31.

[3] Ibid., III, 316, and I, 111.

> What ultimately guarantees objectivity itself is the way in which it is approached, the specific direction that the spirit gives itself in relation to a proposed objective context.[1]

> The highest objective truth that is accessible to the spirit is ultimately the form of its own activity. In the totality of its own achievements, in the knowledge of the specific rule by which each of them is determined, . . . the human spirit now perceives itself and reality.[2]

So objectivity is not so much a noun or an adjective as a verb--a process of objectivizing. Cassirer refers to the symbolic function as "the unhalting process of objectivization,"[3] and each symbolic mode as one of objectivization.[4]

The objective is not so much a matter of a substance which has permanence, but of the determinate form which has given it its permanence. The more fundamental problem is "meaning" and not "being."[5] This is the more appropriate way of dealing with objectivity.

5. Contrasted to other views

Cassirer distinguishes his position from both empiricism and idealism.

a. Empiricism. For the empiricist man's knowing is based on the data he receives through his senses, on facts which are verified by direct sensations, on "the immediate givenness of simple sensations."[6] Out of the multitude of such separated and discrete sensations some are selected for particular attention and the others are interpreted with reference to those favored points of reference.[1] In this way a unity is achieved by accomplishing an association of many particular impressions.[2]

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[1] *Ibid.*, I, 80.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 111.

[3] Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, p. 211; also Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, III, 53.

[4] Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, I, 78.

[5] *Ibid.*, III, 316, 321; also I, 85-93, and II, 247.

[6] *Ibid.*, I, 87.

Cassirer points out that there is no raw, bare, unadorned sensation but that all man's sensibility is received in some form.[3] That form is not subsequently imposed on a primordial sensation but is given in the sensation.[4] Facticity itself is evidence of a form-giving function and is not simply the obvious result of raw sensation.[5] The "facts" of a visual inversion are changed not by any shift in the sensory data offered to the observor but by a shift in the frame of reference or the set of relations in which the data is taken. Facticity is established by the symbolic function.[6] A chemical formula, for example, is not a hard fact emerging from raw sensation but the establishment of a perception in a very complex and highly selective set of relations.[7] Far from being the discovery of the fundamental building-blocks of human knowing, science is a highly differentiated and precise type of knowing and perception available to only a small portion of the human population. It is one of the ways in which form is given to experience. As will be evident in Section B on levels of form-giving, the "simple sensations" on which empirical work is based actually represent one of the most complex and highly refined levels of the symbolic function.

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[1] _Ibid_., III, 160.

[2] _Ibid_., I, 102.

[3] _Ibid_., III, 424.

[4] _Ibid_., I, 110.

[5] Cassirer, _An Essay on Man_, p. 21.

[6] Cassirer, _The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms_, III, 53 and 158.

[7] _Ibid_., I, 109.

The selection of certain data for particular attention displays the form-giving function even more clearly. Some determining viewpoint affects that selection. It is not simply a random affair.[1] The giving of attention, like the receiving of the simple sensation, is rooted in the formative activity of the human spirit.

b. Idealism. Cassirer appears to be an idealist when he stands in contrast to empiricism. However, he establishes his position as far from idealism as from empiricism. Knowledge does not emerge as a pure function of the human mind apart from its contact with the sensory world any more than it appears entirely through sensory impressions.

Cassirer will not tolerate the juxtaposition of sensibility and intelligibility.[2] This isolation, either on the side of empiricism or idealism sets the basis for all skepticism, which exposes the inadequacy of both of those positions.[3] So he affirms that "the form-giving function is given within the sensory perception,"[4] and that "the authentic and essential life of the pure idea comes to us only when phenomena 'stain the white radiance of eternity.'"[5] The possibility of distinguishing the form-giving function from sensory material emerges only on a much higher level of differentiation and would not be possible at all if it had not first been given within the most primordial impressions. So the symbolic function is the basis for thought. Paul Ricoeur succinctly expresses this relationship of

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[1] Ibid., III, 160.

[2] Ibid., I, 86.

[3] Ibid., p. 188.

[4] Ibid., p. 110.

[5] Ibid., p. 88.

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intellectual activity to symbolic activity with his phrase: "The symbol gives rise to thought."[1]

The world of human knowledge which Cassirer offers is one "whose inner quality is still wholly sensory, but which really discloses a formed sensibility, that is to say, a sensibility governed by the spirit."[2] The symbolic function is an exercise of the whole man. It is, finally, what is most distinctive about man. So man may be identified as *animal symbolicum*.[3]

6. Involves a process

The form-giving function is the quality which not only distinguishes man from other creatures but which also gives unity to human experience. Yet, this unifying function is manifested in a diversity of modes (language, art, myth, religion, mathematics, etc.). Cassirer manages to deal with each within its own frame of reference, emphasizing its distinctive character, while he still points to their common symbolic function. He accomplishes the task by portraying the symbolic function as an extended process--an "unhalting process," one which "never ends."[4]

a. *Direction of the process*. This process is a movement from a very diffuse and undifferentiated situation toward one which is increasingly determinate and distinct--formed.[5] At the beginning of the process no distinction can be made between "subject" and "object." These spheres

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[1] Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, p. 347.

[2] Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, I, 87.

[3] Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, p. 26.

[4] Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, III, 53 and 476.

[5] *Ibid.*, I, 280.

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become defined in the process.[1] What is at first an indifferent sequence of fleeting impressions gradually emerges into distinct shapes and independent characters.[2]

Space, and time as well, are not "given" as a ready-made possession of the psyche. Instead, they come into being "only in the process, or, one might say, in the general movement of consciousness."[3] Even such basic relations emerge out of this process rather than existing before it. The same is true of the "I."

The form-giving process can be called a "movement of consciousness," or, as mentioned earlier, "the process of objectivization."[4] Cassirer also refers to it as the activity of the human spirit,[5] the process "by which the spirit proceeds towards its self-revelation."[6]

b. *Poles within the process*. In this process there is a continual interaction between two poles--Life and Spirit. These two poles are characterized in various ways:

LIFE	SPIRIT
organic, vital functions[7]	spiritual functions
sensuous[8]	intuitive

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[1] *Ibid*., I, 93, and II, 13, and III, 84.

[2] *Ibid*., II, 31.

[3] *Ibid*., I, 99.

[4] *Ibid*., III, 53.

[5] *Ibid*., I, 78-81, and III, 339.

[6] *Ibid*., I, 78.

[7] *Ibid*., III, 275.

[8] *Ibid*., I, 177 and 198.

efficient power[1]	formative power
phenomenon[2]	idea
particular[3]	universal
part[4]	whole
sensation[5]	conception
many[6]	one

The inadequacy of empiricists and of rationalists is that each of them works entirely from one of those poles and cannot successfully bring the other into significant contact with it.[7] In contrast to them Cassirer portrays how these two aspects of consciousness have a common root and must continually interpenetrate one another in every phase of the process of objectivization. They are "concurrent and mutually determining one another."[8] They are joined in "reciprocity and correlation."[9]

One illustration will indicate how seriously he views this interaction. A particular color, let us say "red," manifests itself. It is a particular sensation. At the same time, as the surface of a block it not only manifests itself but serves a form-giving function of making this block visible in its proportions. All the while, of course, "red" itself is dependent upon the order in which it stands in the color spectrum, so it was itself formed and cannot be regarded as a "raw sensation."[1]

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[1] Ernst Cassirer, "'Spirit' and 'Life' in Contemporary Philosophy," _The Philosophy of Ernst Cassirer_, ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp (New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1949), p. 875.

[2] Cassirer, _The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms_, I, 88.

[3] _Ibid_., p. 86.

[4] _Ibid_., p. 101.

[5] _Ibid_., III, 323.

[6] _Ibid_., I, 105.

[7] _Ibid_., pp. 102-103.

[8] _Ibid_., p. 98.

[9] _Ibid_., p. 87.

Sensation requires formative power, and form requires the efficient power of sensation.[2] Spirit and life are different functions of the one human experience. One never outgrows the need for the other. "The features which the spirit seems to have left behind it are also present in its depths."[3]

Something new is emerging on the scene in Cassirer's work, however. He is stretching these traditional divisions of human experience to the point where a person is forced to ask whether such categories are the most helpful for a full understanding of consciousness. Especially in his discussions of the whole and the parts Cassirer insists that any segment of experience can be understood only with reference to the totality of experience.[4]

> It is, as it were, the fundamental principle of cognition that the universal can be perceived only in the particular, while the particular can be thought only in reference to the universal.[5]
>
> From the standpoint of phenomenological inquiry there is no more a "matter in itself" than a "form in itself"; there are only total experiences.[6]

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[1] Ibid., III, 202; compare also p. 131.

[2] Ibid., I, 198; III, 87; also Cassirer, "'Spirit' and 'Life' in Contemporary Philosophy," p. 875.

[3] Ibid., III, 78, citing G. W. F. Hegel, "Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte," Sämmtliche Werke (Leipzig, 1949), IX, 98.

[4] Cassirer, Language and Myth, p. 92; also Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, I, 87 and 101-105, 110, 112; III, 72.

[5] Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, I, 86.

[6] Ibid., III, 199.

Such rooting in the fullness of experience seems to transcend the traditional divisions.

Cassirer is more inclined to distinguish between less differentiated and more differentiated experience, but in all cases he is concerned with the total experience including both Spirit and Life. This is evident from his understanding of the various levels of the form-giving function within the on-going process.

c. Levels in the process. Less differentiated experience is located at the beginning of the process. Here the symbolic function is more "expressive" in character. A phenomenon at this elemental level of consciousness presses for attention and as it is experienced in its totality makes itself known as "inwardly animated." It contains its own formative activity already at this primitive level of experience. This expressive level of the process is fundamental for the entire movement of consciousness. All more differentiated levels emerge from it. The first two levels of the symbolic function to be discussed in the second half of this chapter--intensification and identification--are both expressive.

What so presents itself in an expressive way presses for the possibility of also pointing beyond itself and "representing" other elements of experience. So the representative level emerges directly from the more primitive level and never loses its dependence on it. Here experience is sufficiently differentiated so that one element in a perception is recognized as having the capacity of pointing beyond itself toward others.

At the highest level of differentiation this representation points not only toward another element of experience but toward the total configuration in which an experience is known, toward the "mode of vision" in which the perception is exercised. This is the conceptual level of the symbolic function.

It is through the mediation of these various levels of the symbolic function that Cassirer is able to maintain the integrity of each of the various modes of form-giving and also establish their continuity in one unifying function. The levels of form-giving are not a way of classifying the various modes, however. One mode is likely to function at various levels of differentiation. Some modes tend to be at one end of the scale. For example, the mythic mode is located on the less differentiated end of the scale and the mathematical mode on the more differentiated end. The relationship of the modes of symbolic functioning to the levels in the process can best be portrayed in chart form, as on the next page.

The second half of this chapter is an explication of the chart, describing the character of symbolic formation at the various levels. This is of considerable significance for this dissertation not only because it demonstrates the relationship between different types of symbolic functions but also because there is a striking parallel between the movement of consciousness as Cassirer portrays it and one of the dynamics of identity formation proposed by Erik Erikson.[1]

B. Levels of Form-Giving

Before the process of objectivization begins there is a phase of complete undifferentiation. "Before the world as a whole has split into determinate, enduring, and unitary forms, there is a phase during which it exists for man in unformed feeling."[2] This is variously described by Cassirer as:

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[1] Below, Chapter VIII.

[2] *Ibid.*, II, 200.

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		Levels of Objectivization				
		Flux	Intensification	Identification	Representation	Conception
Modes	Myth		Mana	Momentary gods		
	Religion				Functional gods Recognition of signs as such	Mono-theism | Mystical Union
	Language		Interjection Onomatopoeic Mimetic	Naming	Class formation by prefix and suffix Qualifying concepts	Logical judgment Relative pronouns Copula
	Art		In touch with elemental feelings Intensification of reality	Presents total image of reality Gives a form to the intuition	A given impression is amplified beyond itself Awareness that we ourselves are creating	Gives itself to pure contemplation
	Science				Classification Models (Newton)	Prin-ciples | Theoretic Constructs
SELF			Bodily feelings	Immediate life feeling Soul is life Each man is many souls	Soul as tutelary spirit Ethical consciousness	Sense of Self Person-ality | Mystical Union

Figure 1. Process of Objectivization in Its Various Modalities

— the perpetual flux of sensory contents[1]

— the constant flux of the contents of consciousness[2]

— ephemeral sensory stimulus[3]

— an undifferentiated diversity of sensory impressions[4]

— uniform flux of consciousness[5]

— the flux of impressions[6]

— the even flow of appearances[7]

This phase appears to serve Cassirer much as the "TOHU W'BOHU" serves the creation myth of Genesis. It is a point of contrast to the forming process which is to follow.

1. Level One -- Intensification

a. The first intimations of differentiation. In the midst of the flux just described, the first glimmer of consciousness comes as "the subtlest sensitivity to the peculiar periodicity and rhythm" of life.[8] Cassirer similarly speaks of it as "a unique stirring, a momentary tension and release."[9] In other contexts he uses such metaphors as these for this phase:

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

[2] *Ibid.*, I, 89.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 153.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 268.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 280.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 281.

[7] *Ibid.*, III, 221.

[8] *Ibid.*, II, 108.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 200.

— In the midst of the stream there form separate vortices,[1]

— The even flow of appearances [is] interrupted in some way and certain favored points [are] singled out.[2]

— In its unremitting, constant flow certain favored points are gradually singled out, . . . endowed with a special kind of accent.[3]

— The flux of consciousness is for the first time halted.[4]

It is as though a rhythm of waves and currents develops in the sea of undifferentiated sensations.[5]

All of this is happening "long before man's consciousness forms its first concepts concerning the basic differentiations of number, time, and space."[6] This is an amazing statement from Cassirer, who regards the structures of space and time as so basic to experience. Even they develop later out of these primordial impressions. Similarly, any sense of "inside" and "outside" or "subject" and "object" are distinctions which come much later. Cassirer makes this point when he criticizes Herder, who speaks of this phase in a metaphor similar to those of Cassirer. Herder writes: "In the ocean of sensations that flow into [man's soul] from all the senses, he can, in a manner of speaking, isolate and stop one wave, and direct his attention toward the wave."[7] The metaphor of ocean and wave gives Cassirer no problem. However, the sense that a man, as it were, stands outside and makes an independent judgment about whether to set apart one wave or another is too detached a role for consciousness at this phase of experience.[1] Consciousness has not begun to see itself separate from what is around it. The world "in every moment appears in a different, strangely hovering, and ephemeral light."[2]

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[1] Ibid., III, 221.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, III, 116.

[4] Ibid., I, 89.

[5] Ibid., p. 285.

[6] Ibid., II, 108.

[7] Ibid., I, 152, citing J. G. Herder, "Über den Ursprung der Sprache," (1772), Werke, ed. B. Suphan, V, 34.

b. The expressive quality of these impressions. These sensory impressions have an expressive quality about them as consciousness first receives them. There is no such thing as a "dead object" at this primitive level of consciousness.[3] The dead matter of sensation, described as sense data, is a later interpretation which man can know only after much more differentiation has taken place.[4]

The experience of friendliness or unfriendliness is more primitive than the phenemenon of a blue spot.[5] The vortices that emerge from the flux have a "character" about them which is felt more than observed. They are variously described by Cassirer as benignant or malignant, friendly or inimical, familiar or uncanny, alluring and fascinating or repellent and threatening, gloomy or joyful, agitating or soothing, pacifying or terrifying.[6] "Empirically, things are poignant, tragic, beautiful, humorous, settled, disturbed, comfortable, annoying, barren, harsh, consoling, splendid, fearful; are such immediately and in their own right and behalf."[1] They evoke a kind of "spiritual excitement;" they "grip the soul."[2]

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[1] Ibid., III, 75.

[2] Ibid., p. 107.

[3] Cassirer, An Essay on Man, p. 77.

[4] Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, III, 67 and 72.

[5] Ibid., p. 65, citing Kurt Koffka, Die Grundlagen der psychischen Entwicklung (Osterwieck am Harz, 1921), pp. 94-96.

[6] Cassirer, An Essay on Man, p. 77; also Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, III, 67 and 72.

c. The source of the symbolic function. This is the source of symbolic formulation. We cannot get to a more primitive level nor to any explanation behind it.[3]

d. The mode of myth. The mythic mode of consciousness is most helpful for explicating this stage of intensification.[4]

> In this indeterminacy of feeling [the flux] certain impressions are set off from the common background by their special intensity and force. To them correspond the first mythological images. They are . . . the expression of a unique stirring, a momentary tension and release, of the consciousness which perhaps will never be repeated in similar form.[5]

These "certain impressions" have an expressive quality about them because the mythic mode in which they are experienced is a dramatic world in which the phenomena have a fluid, quite indeterminate and demonic character.[6] Every phenomenon is an incarnation.[7]

What scholarship was sensing when it identified gods and demons as personifications of nature's processes was that myth expresses dramatic

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[1] Cassirer, An Essay on Man, p. 78, citing John Dewey, Experience and Nature (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co., 1925), p. 96.

[2] Cassirer, Language and Myth, p. 89, and Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, I, 291, citing H. Osthoff, Vom Suppletivwesen der indogermanischen Sprachen (Heidelberg: Akademische Rede, 1899).

[3] Above, p. 20.

[4] Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, III, 107.

[5] Ibid., II, 200.

[6] Cassirer, An Essay on Man, pp. 76-77.

[7] Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, III, 68 and 107.

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qualities and "character" in its perceptions rather than aggregates of lifeless sense data. However, "personification" points to a reality more clearly defined and objectivized than is appropriate for myth.[1] These gods and demons could more appropriately be designated as "mythical objectivizations of particular impressions."[2]

Intensification is a good metaphor for this phase. Not only does it refer to the intensification of some phenomena rather than others, as has been described. It also implies the full intensity with which this occupies the attention of the consciousness.[3] Crucial to the understanding of mythology and of this stage of consciousness is that there is no observer standing back to choose between one impression and another.[4] The phenomenon presses itself on the consciousness at succeeding levels but is particularly evident here.[5] If religion, for example, loses its contact with this level of perception, it will lose its strength.[6]

The appropriate response to an impression with such potency is not a critical evaluation but amazement, θαυμάζειν.[7] The perceiver is quite passive. He has the sense that this experience is being pressed upon him, so he receives it in awe and quite unreflectively.[8] "That's just the way things are," he declares. The inhabitants of the base of Mt. Elgon in Africa greet the moment of the sunrise by offering their breath or spittle. When asked why, they respond, "We have always done it."[1]

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[1] *Ibid*., pp. 70-71.

[2] *Ibid*., II, 201.

[3] *Ibid*., II, 74.

[4] *Ibid*., III, 107.

[5] *Ibid*., II, 73-74.

[6] *Ibid*., pp. 201 and 253.

[7] *Ibid*., p. 78.

[8] *Ibid*., III, 75.

Cassirer spells out the qualities in which the mythic mode is experienced on this level. The first intimations of time begin here already. However, time is felt in a biological way as the rhythmic ebb and flow of life present in the human body, in the change of day into night, and in the flowering and fading of plants.[2]

Space also begins to take form. Those impressions which capture the attention take on greater strength and importance than others. They are endowed with a "sacred" quality and stand out from the "profane" character of the great flux of sensations which fade more into the background. So space is first understood, not as "here" over against "there," but as sacred, as emerging out of the profane and having a distinct place in the consciousness.[3]

2. Level Two -- Identification

The next level in this process of objectivization is that of "naming" or "identifying" these vortices which have impressed themselves with particular vividness. "The liveliest of the sense impressions strive for vocal expression."[4]

a. Fixing perceptions. One way of describing the function of naming is that when an impression takes on a designation it takes on a more specific shape or formulation.[1] It is embodied.[2] The movement toward objectivity is evident.[3]

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[1] Carl G. Jung, Man and His Symbols (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1964), p. 81.

[2] Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, II, 109.

[3] Ibid., pp. 72-83.

[4] Cassirer, Language and Myth, p. 89.

Being more concretely formulated the impression which is expressed in a name will be more readily recovered at a later time. The experience is fixed more firmly in the memory.[4] The "finding again" or "recognition" comes more easily.[5] This means, too, that other sensations which have not been identified will be more easily passed over.[6]

b. Creating perceptions. The function of identification is not a matter of first having a clear impression in one's mind and then trying to fix a suitable tag on it. It is not an act of volition.[7] The act of naming is part of the process of discovering and formulating the experience.[8] In a sense the naming brings it into focus. To name is not merely to designate but also to evoke distinctions.[9]

Van der Leeuw demonstrates how naming exercises such a formative power in the mythical world. "The construction of form by means of the name simplified the eternally changing feeling of power."[10]

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[1] Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, I, 107, and III, 77.

[2] Ibid., p. 106.

[3] Ibid., p. 281.

[4] Ibid., pp. 89-90.

[5] Ibid., III, 108.

[6] Ibid., I, 108.

[7] Cassirer, Language and Myth, p. 88.

[8] Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, I, 107 and 285, and III, 90.

[9] Ibid., II, 203, and I, 106-108.

[10] van der Leeuw, Religion in Essence and Manifestations, I, 156.

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There is also a striking similarity to Collingwood's The Principles of Art. When he speaks of the expressive quality of art, he says, "Until a man has expressed his emotion, he does not yet know what emotion it is. The act of expressing it is therefore an exploration of his own emotions. He is trying to find out what these emotions are."[1] Until he gives them concrete form, the artist is aware of only a vague excitement. In the process of giving it a shape or a name, he himself calls that sense into being in its concreteness. Both Cassirer and Collingwood emphasize the sense of release or resolution of tension which characterizes this act.[2]

Not only artists but also children experience the sense of discovery and exhilaration in the act of "naming" things.[3] This approach adds new dimensions to Adam's task in the Garden of Eden.

c. Naming as identification. When the child inquires about a name, he asks, "What is it?" and not "What is it called?"[4] The naming, which was part of the shaping, is identical with perception.

> This type of objectification has as yet nothing to do with attributing an entirely independent reality to the content -- it is concerned solely with fixing the content for knowledge and characterizing it for consciousness as something identical with itself and recurrent amid the flux of impressions.[5]

What is fixed in a name is identical with itself and not a tag for some separate reality.[6]

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[1] R. G. Collingwood, The Principles of Art (New York: Oxford University Press - Galaxy, 1958), p. 148.

[2] Ibid., p. 110; also Cassirer, Language and Myth, p. 88.

[3] Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, III, 121.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid., I, 281.

[6] Ibid., I, 89, and II, 38.

Cassirer distinguishes between a "radical metaphor" and a "substitution metaphor." The latter is a word which is substituted for another and points beyond itself to something else. The "radical metaphor", related to this stage, is the primitive form in which the name is identical with the reality.[1]

Language, of course, is the mode in which naming is most clearly portrayed. However, this is a very specific type of naming. The name is identified with a concrete and total impression. It is illustrated by those languages which have a great many names for the various styles of "going" but no name to cover them all.[2] The name is identical with the impression and carries no overtones beyond that.

The language of myth becomes the best illustration. In mythic thinking a person's ego, his very self, is indissolubly linked with his name. Eskimos understand that a man consists of body, soul, and name.[3]

What Cassirer calls "momentary gods," following the lead of H. K. Usener, belong to this level of consciousness.[4] These gods are identical with a specific impression. They are not representative of some common quality found in a variety of separate sensations. The names of these gods convey the power of the gods, so these names are to be carefully guarded so they will not be abused.[5]

The beginnings of creative elaboration are also present in the mythic consciousness. At this level the spirit of man does not just receive "impressions" but exercises an active force of "expressions" by presenting an image world of its own.[1] Though it has not yet risen to the level of a "free spiritual act," the movement toward objectivization is operating here.[2]

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[1] Cassirer, Language and Myth, pp. 83-99.

[2] Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, I, 291; there are five to six thousand names describing a camel in Arabic. Cassirer, An Essay on Man, p. 135.

[3] Cassirer, Language and Myth, pp. 49-50.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 18, citing H. K. Usener, Gotternamen (Bonn, 1896).

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 53; also Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, II, 41.

So, this identification bears within itself the possibilities of breaking beyond itself.[3] Such intense focus on certain impressions not only leaves others unattended to. It also presses for the possibility of seeing such other more subdued impressions in the light of the more prominent ones.[4] This ushers in the next stage, representation.

3. Level Three -- Representation

In both of the levels of consciousness so far described the expressive aspect of experience predominates. Consequently, at those levels, consciousness is dealing with immediate impressions which command the full attention. This full immediacy presents itself to the consciousness as a whole image, a total configuration, in which there is still no distinction between subject or object. The images of the expressive stages are fleeting, the gods are momentary. No image is exactly like any other image. It is this image in its immediate totality that is identified or named.

The representational stage in this process of objectivization emerges from these earlier developments.

a. Differentiation. The higher degree of differentiation or determination which appears in representation can be described in terms of the emergence of attributes and objects at this level of objectivization.

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[1] Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, II, 23.

[2] Ibid., pp. 14, 15 and 23.

[3] Ibid., III, 108, and II, 237.

[4] Ibid., II, 255.

(1) Attributes. "From the passing dream of images, language first singles out certain factors, certain stable particularities and attributes."[1] When such a quality appears again in another configuration or image, it is recognized as identical with the one seen before. "Recognition" and "identification" were also used to describe the last level. The element of representation was already beginning there.

However, now a higher degree of differentiation has appeared, first, because a more particular and distinct element has been discerned, and, second, because a new degree of stability has been introduced. A similarity or identity will be apprehended within two different and temporally separate impressions.

Actually, a dramatically different step has been taken in the process of differentiation. For the first time, consciousness has stood outside of the images of immediacy in which it had been immersed. It is a significant step toward objectivization.[2]

(2) Objects. Only at this level of differentiation does a "thing" first develop in consciousness. The fleeting character of the images and their full immediacy did not allow for this degree of determinacy earlier in the process.[3]

A child's discernment of another person, even his mother, is difficult at first because he senses strangeness when she is wearing something different or when she is in a different position in the room. He has difficulty identifying her.[1] The immediate image with which his mother had been identified was an experience-totality, and he had not yet learned to recognize the constant "object" from one momentary image to another.

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[1] _Ibid_., III, 115.

[2] _Ibid_., III, 115, and I, 283; See also p. 22 above.

[3] _Ibid_., III, 121-122.

An important step is taken when different experience-totalities are recognized as being directed toward the same thing.[2] From the passing images a particular characteristic is detached and serves as a means for recognizing an object, though it appears in a variety of whole perceptions.[3] This characteristic "represents" the object. It points to something constant and enduring in the midst of the fleeting images.[4]

This is a step which the mythic mode of consciousness does not take. That mode remains at the level of "identification" because for it each characteristic is identified as a substance unto itself (e.g., alchemy). Mythic consciousness does not have the capacity of representing an object in succeeding "experience-totalities.[5]

The understanding of the gods in the mythic mode identifies them in their full immediacy. So they have a "momentary" or "demonic" nature. When greater continuity is established and a god is represented in a human activity that has more constancy and is recognized in a number of different situations, the "specialized" or "occupational" gods take shape. The Roman gods of agriculture serve as an example. Their arrival marks a breakthrough past the mythic consciousness.[1]

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[1] Ibid., p. 121.

[2] Ibid., p. 199.

[3] Ibid., III, 121 and 157, and I, 283.

[4] Ibid., III, 154; Cassirer also quotes Herder in support of this position on page 173.

[5] Ibid., II, 66.

b. Self-consciousness. The most critical aspect of this stage of objectivization is that consciousness has now stepped out of the full immediacy of experience. Man has stepped back from that pervasive power. As the "object" has come into view, so also the "subject" emerges on this level of consciousness.[2]

This has happened not as a counter-movement to the expressive quality of experience at the lower levels. Instead, as man's perceptions became defined with greater intensity,[3] an inner tension was built up which would make it possible for consciousness to break out into this new stage, to see "qualities" and "things" begin to emerge, to detect elements of constancy in the midst of the fleeting, immediate images. There the distinction of "inside" and "outside" first becomes evident. The "subject " stands over against the "object," the "I" in contrast to the "it."

From now on man, being able to "stand back" from his immediate impressions, has a new dimension of power and awareness. It is as though experience up to this point functioned on a single plane, and now another, intersecting plane has come into the configuration.

4. Level Four -- Conception

On the level of representation it became possible to detect how one segment of a perception pointed beyond itself to other segments. This bond or relation gives form to experience. At the level of conception the attention is given entirely to the relation itself, now freed from its sensuous roots. "The I turns from the objects apprehended in vision, toward the manner of seeing, the character of the vision itself."[1]

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[1] Ibid., II, 203 and 206; also Cassirer, Language and Myth, pp. 19-20.

[2] Below, pp. 53-59.

[3] Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, III, 140.

a. The pure relation. At this level of consciousness, man is dealing only with the relations between various elements of experience, the forms which have shaped experience, and not the contents of experience.[2] "The sign has no sensuous mass of its own; . . . it hovers in the pure ether of meaning; it has the power to represent not the mere particulars of consciousness but defines the direction of such a general movement."[3] Such signs are the symbolic forms with the pure function of signification.[4]

A relation is not to be understood as one particular of experience alongside others.[5] It is not a component of that which it composes. If the various elements in the contents of experience are represented in such a sequence as x_1, x_2, x_3, etc., then the relation (φ) is not one more in this series. Instead, it serves as a factor of quite a different order yet related in a way that can be represented as $\varphi(x)$.[6]

In moving into this "pure" state these relations are now separated from the world of intuition. "All particularities are effaced."[7]

This is not to be understood as a break from previous levels in the development of consciousness. It is the continuation of a trend toward greater articulation and differentiation which moved through the entire process.[1] The symbolic form which is displayed in its purest form here has been the fundamental function informing every level of experience and making it possible in the first place.

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[1] Ibid., p. 288.

[2] Ibid., I, 108.

[3] Ibid., p. 109.

[4] Ibid., III, 299.

[5] Ibid., p. 311.

[6] Ibid., p. 301.

[7] Ibid., pp. 319 and 339.

Language was present in such primitive forms as interjections at the earliest level of consciousness, and language is found here at the other end of the spectrum as well. It is in language that discursive thought could develop. Yet, at this stage even language reaches its limits because language can never completely extricate itself from the sensuous elements of life.[2] So the relational thought which is first expressed in language finally breaks beyond it in its purest expression. Mathematical formulations emerge as the clearest statement of pure relation. "All exact concept formation starts from the realm of number."[3]

b. Its aim. As the culmination of the process moving toward increasing differentiation and determination, the characteristics of these expressions of pure relation are to be as universal as possible ("absolute truth" as the goal) and to be as precise as possible.[4] The realm of number lends itself to these goals.

This notion of "aim" demonstrates the teleological element of symbolic forms. At every level, however, symbolic forms have exercised "certain lines of aim"[5] or a "teleological perspective"[6] or "the striving of the

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[1] Ibid., p. 307.

[2] Ibid., pp. 330-340 and 110.

[3] Ibid., pp. 296-98 and 341-56.

[4] Ibid., I, 208 and 284.

[5] Ibid., III, 305.

[6] Cassirer, Language and Myth, p. 37.

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present toward the future"[1] or "directions which the process of determination may follow."[2] This is the presence of the future in the perception of the present.[3] The same thrust is carried by the metaphor of "intentionality," as proposed by Brentano. He holds that it is "intentionality" with its future-oriented connotations which gives a determination of meaning to the psychic content of experience.[4]

c. Its creative possibilities. Being freed from the ties to sensuous experience the world of pure relation has the possibility of exercising a creative role in offering new configurations and perspectives in which things can be viewed.[5] Man has the capacity for placing his own independent imprint upon experience and so to "articulate diverse spheres and forms of reality."[6]

The movement of consciousness as completely passive and subject to the impressions that are pressed upon it has now progressed to the point where consciousness is able to stand outside of such immediacy, not only to become aware of the relations which have constituted his perceptions but even to create new sets of relations and therefore new worlds.

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[1] Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, III, 180-182.

[2] Ibid., I, 288.

[3] Ibid., III, 179-90 and 202.

[4] Ibid., p. 196, citing Franz Brentano, Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt (Leipzig, 1874), I, 115.

[5] Ibid., p. 306.

[6] Ibid., I, 107.

CHAPTER II

THE SYMBOLIC FUNCTION AS PERSONAL ORIENTATION

A second quality of the symbolic function as it will be understood in this dissertation is its capacity to orient man in the world, an aspect of the symbolic function most vividly treated in the work of Mircea Eliade.

A. The Necessity of Orientation

The orientation of man in the world is necessary for human existence.

From the work of Spencer and Gillen with Arunta tribes in Australia, Eliade picked up the account of the sacred pole, kauwa-auwa, of the Achilpa tribe.[1] The Achilpa believed that the traditions and institutions of their tribe had been divinely established by their esteemed ancestor, Numbakula. The ascension of Numbakula occurred after he carved a sacred pole out of a gum tree, set it in the earth, anointed it with blood, and then climbed up the pole into the sky. The Achilpa is a nomadic people, and they carry the pole with them whenever they move to a new location. There the kauwa-auwa is erected in their encampment. When the food is exhausted and it is time to move on, the elders decide the direction for the next movement of the tribe on the basis of the way the pole has leaned since it was first set up.

The anthropologists reported that once when the pole broke the tribe was thrown into consternation. Its members wandered bewildered and without

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[1] B. Spencer and F. J. Gillen, The Arunta (London, 1926), I, 388, cited by Eliade in The Sacred and the Profane, p. 33.

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direction for a while and finally gave up on knowing which way to go. They collapsed from anxiety and exhaustion and simply laid down on the ground as a group to die. Having lost their orientation in the world they could not survive.

A similar point is found in the European legend of Parsifal and the Fisher King, who held the secret of the Holy Graal. Life in the kingdom was deteriorating -- the old King was paralyzed from some mysterious disease, the springs of the mountains were running dry, the trees failed to yield fruit, animals would not breed, the place and its gardens were crumbling. It was a malaise unto death -- until one ungainly, awkward knight who understood none of the proprieties of court life came to the castle. He strode straight to the presence of the king, ignoring all the customary protocol, and immediately asked him, "Where is the Graal?" As soon as this crucial question was asked, the king was healed, the springs once again began to flow and the plants and animals to reproduce. Life and vitality was restored.

The Holy Graal was the source of significance and meaning for the kingdom. When all access to its power was cut off, the kingdom languished; and not until it was once again brought into the focus of attention could life be restored to its former vigor.[1]

Victor Frankl's account of life in Nazi concentration camps confirms the point that some sense of orientation or meaning in life is essential for man's survival.[2] Those prisoners who had some sense of orientation had a much higher survival rate. Others tended, after the manner of the Achilpa and the Fisher King, simply to wait for death to overtake them. Orientation emerges in all these instances as a fundamental requirement for the continuation of life. "Where there is no vision, the people perish."[1]

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[1] Jessie L. Weston, From Ritual to Romance (Cambridge, 1920), pp. 12-14, cited by Eliade in Images and Symbols, pp. 55-57.

[2] Victor Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning, trans. Ilse Lasch (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963).

B. The Possibility of Orientation (Eliade)

The possibility of such orientation for man in the world is established by the symbolic function. Both the kauwa-auwa and the Holy Graal were symbols which offered a point of orientation to a community of people.

Such symbols are portrayed by Eliade as "irruptions of the sacred."[2] Profane space, by comparison, is homogeneous.[3] Every segment of it is neutral, and no qualitative distinctions can be made within it. It is the trackless, unmarked wasteland to which T. S. Eliot refers[4] and the formless, directionless mire in which Samuel Beckett's drama is set.[5]

The possibility of orientation in such a homogeneous space is created by a symbol, "the irruption of the sacred." (For Jacob it was the dream of a ladder reaching to heaven.)[6] This establishes a firm place in the midst of the amorphous flow. Through the symbol a formed cosmos begins to take shape.[7] The symbolic function transforms chaos into cosmos.[8]

Eliade calls this "cosmicizing." It puts an end to "the tension and anxiety caused by the relativity and disorientation [of homogeneous space]."[1] It is the process by which an order emerges, limits are established, a universe is defined, and man himself is constituted.[2]

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[1] Prov. 29:18.

[2] Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, p. 26.

[3] Ibid., p. 22.

[4] T. S. Eliot, The Wasteland and Other Poems (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1934).

[5] Samuel Beckett, How It Is (New York: Grove Press, 1961). Bom slogs toward Pim through a landscape of mud.

[6] Gen. 28:12-19.

[7] Eliade, Images and Symbols, p. 173.

[8] Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, p. 31.

Without such a frame of reference it would not be possible for a man to function effectively. A symbolic configuration, however, establishes a "mode of being in the world."[3] It gives meaning to the world and to human life.[4] Out of such meaning and value emerge models for behavior and a course for human conduct.[5] A man's symbolic orientation in the world provides the basis for his morality and the context for his decision-making.

This function of symbols is most easily recognized in those symbols which Eliade describes in "symbolism of the center" -- the sacred tree, the cosmic axis, the navel of the earth, the rock at the base of the world, and the mandala.[6] "I am at the center of the world," the neophyte Kwakiutl Indian of British Columbia announces in the ceremonial house during his initiation ceremony.[7] These symbols of the center correlate well with those Jungian archetypes which represent the sense of wholeness and integration -- the mandala, the Christ figure, the quaternity, and the Self.[8]

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[1] Ibid., p. 27.

[2] Mircea Eliade, Myth and Reality, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1963), p. 145.

[3] Mircea Eliade, Myths, Dreams, and Mysteries, trans. Philip Mairet (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1960), p. 24.

[4] Eliade, Myth and Reality, p. 145.

[5] Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, pp. 2, 6, 8, and 27.

[6] Eliade, Images and Symbols, pp. 27-56.

[7] Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, p. 36.

[8] Carl G. Jung, Psyche and Symbol, ed. Violet S. De Laszio (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1958), pp. 321, 22-35, 35-60.

Yet, the function of orientation which these symbols portray with particular vividness is also performed in every symbolizing activity. The symbolism of water, for example, is in many ways antithetical to the symbolism of the center. Even so, it frequently serves to orient man in the world through such initiation rites as Christian baptism. Even non-religious symbols, though they do not offer meaning or orientation to the whole person, always serve to orient man in the world at least to some small degree.

The work of Paul Ricoeur in The Symbolism of Evil supports this quality of the symbolic function when he says that "the sacred is shown in a fragment of the cosmos, which, in return, loses its concrete limits, gets charged with innumerable meanings, integrates and unifies the greatest possible number of the sections of anthropocosmic experiences."[1] "Fragments of the cosmos" charged with such meaning are the symbols on which Ricoeur bases his typology.

First, Ricoeur describes three significant ways in which man experiences fault -- as defilement, as sin, and as guilt. Already at this most primitive level experience is expressed symbolically -- defilement as a stain or blemish and sin as trespassing or missing the mark. These are the primary symbols functioning on the most elemental level.[2]

In the second stage of his project Ricoeur sets these primary symbols into their wider context. To do this he draws on the myths which offer more of a total orientation to life.[3] This is a second order of symbol. Both the primary symbols and the myths share the function of establishing "the being of men in the being of the world."[1]

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[1] Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, p. 11.

[2] Ibid., p. 9.

[3] Ibid., pp. 170-71.

These symbols cannot be reduced to some clearer language which will express the reality of man and his orientation in the world in a more accurate way.[2] Any analysis or philosophic reflection can only build on the material which they offer for thought. "The symbol gives rise to thought."[3] It is by symbols and not by empirical observations or rational thought that man receives his orientation in the world.

This is precisely the point made by Cassirer and emphasized in the first chapter of this dissertation. In fact, all that has been proposed by Eliade and Ricoeur fits nicely into Cassirer's scheme. Cassirer's description of the emergence of subjectivity, especially in his work on language and on myth, demonstrates how the development of the self fits into the total form-giving process. Not only does it concur with Eliade's emphasis on the symbolic function of orientation. It also supplements Eliade by showing the relation between the emergence of the object and the subject and by describing the different levels of self-awareness which man experiences as the symbolic function gives shape to his life.

C. The Emergence of Subjectivity (Cassirer)

Parallel to Cassirer's "process of objectivization" is his account of how subjectivity emerges in human experience. Once the affinity of these movements to the nineteenth century conception of linear evolution has been pointed out, it is difficult to avoid acknowledging Cassirer's acceptance of its assumptions. Although he may argue that he is not so much referring to a time continuum as to a series of levels of self-consciousness, he does imply an inferior level of perception among the people of primitive cultures. This aspect of his approach presents some fundamental problems which must be dealt with at the end of this chapter.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 356.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 163.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 347.

1. The undifferentiated beginning

For Cassirer, the self is not at the beginning. The "I" is the subject, the counterpart of the object. At the beginning there is neither subject nor object. If the movement of consciousness is one toward objectivization,[1] it is also one toward subjectivization.

This is no "self" at the beginning to contemplate what it thinks about the world or what it will do to it just as there is no set world out there to be thought about or to be acted on. In the beginning is TOHU W'BOHU. Life is a totality.[2] There is no distinction between "inward" and "outward," but everything seems to touch and flow immediately with everything else.[3] Man is immersed in the rhythms of nature.[4]

In the beginning man is at the mercy of this undifferentiated mixture of experience.

> The primary mythical fact is a man divided and torn to and fro by manifold outward impressions, each bearing a definite magical-mythical character, each laying claim to the whole of human consciousness and drawing it into its sphere, each imprinting its own color and mood. At first the ego has nothing to oppose to this impression and is unable to change it but can only accept it and become its prisoner. It is tossed this way and that by the expressive factors of the various phenomena, which assault it suddenly and irresistibly.[5]

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[1] Above, pp. 22 and 26.

[2] Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, II, 194.

[3] Ibid., I, 261.

[4] Ibid., II, 187-190.

[5] Ibid., III, 90.

There is no inner "I" to provide a center for the many relations, and the ebb and flow on which man is cast is like the homogeneity of space to which Eliade referred.[1]

2. The object calls forth the subject

Instead of the self giving form to the gods, to the other selves he encounters around him, and to the objects he encounters,[2] the pattern appears at times to be reversed. It is only as a "Thou" takes shape over against him that the person begins to glimpse the possibility of his own subjectivity.[3] The two emerge simultaneously, each dependent on the other, in the process of differentiation.

Similarly, it is with reference to the gods that the person comes to perceive his own identity. As the gods become more differentiated, the understanding of the self becomes more individualized and self-conscious.[4] "The I, man's true 'self,' finds itself only through the detour of the divine I."[5] As man projects his own experience outward in his vision of god, he comes to discover his own "self."[6]

3. Action precedes understanding

Action comes first; mythical expressions later.[7] The cult precedes

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[1] Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, pp. 22-24.

[2] Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, I, 260.

[3] Ibid., III, 88.

[4] Ibid., II, 211 and 218.

[5] Ibid., p. 205.

[6] Ibid., p. 223.

[7] Ibid., p. 219. Cassirer states: "The action is the beginning: the mythical explanation, the ʽIERÒS LÓGOS, comes later." However, he immediately

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the myth.[1] Man acts in the undifferentiated chaos, and he begins to discover something of who he is by what happens out of that action. The action is not a calculating one performed because man "knew what he was doing." He comes to know out of the action.

This goes for contemporary cultural expressions as well as for the most primitive gesture. It is in the creations of his spirit -- language, myth, and art -- that he comes to have some sense of who he is in the world. The "object" reveals the subject.[2]

4. Language reveals the process

The personal pronoun as the subject for the action of the verb is the culmination of a long process moving toward that degree of self-consciousness.[3]

Language bears considerable evidence that the world of consciousness is not a division of "subject" and "object." Instead of setting those two against one another it acts to mediate the two in a variety of ways.[4] It sees many different levels of differentiation between subject and object and reflects that in its forms.[5]

The development of languages indicates that the argument between

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qualifies "explanation" in the following sentence. "This explanation merely represents in the form of a narrative what is present as immediate reality in the sacred action." With this qualification his understanding of myth is brought more closely in line with the expressive quality of the myth as it was described on page 34 above.

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 220.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 218. Citing Ernest Kapp, *Grundlinien einer Philosophie der Technik* (Brauschweig: G. Westermann, 1877), pp. 25, 29, and 40.

[3] *Ibid.*, I, 276.

[4] *Ibid.*, II, 259.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 262.

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whether verbs or nouns came first may be beside the point because there were very likely less differentiated forms from which words with these more specific functions later developed. When verbs did develop, they turned out to be far richer than simply active or passive.

They reflect cooperative action, reciprocal action, and reflexive action, and each of these types of action reflects quite a different level on the subject-object continuum, the last one reflecting the greatest amount of self-consciousness.[1] Verbal usages referring to "sensibility" manifest a less clearly defined understanding of the self than verbal occurences referring to "action."[2] Some languages reflect different degrees of objectivity according to the relative "distance" from the subject.[3]

All this is most clearly spelled out in the development of pronouns. The personal pronoun emerged only after great pains of birth. It was preceded by the possessive pronoun.[4] The person understood himself with reference to the objects to which he was related.[5] Some languages reflect closer attachment to some objects than others (e.g., American Indians).[6] It was only after this stage that further differentiation was possible and the "I" could be considered as the center of primary relations in a personal pronoun. With this development the subject was no longer one thing among other things but "the living energetic nucleus from which the action begins and from which the action begins and from which it takes its direction."[1]

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[1] Ibid., I, 259.

[2] Ibid., p. 265.

[3] Ibid., p. 262.

[4] Ibid., p. 259.

[5] Ibid., p. 260.

[6] Ibid., p. 264.

5. The gods reveal the process

A similar development toward a more clear consciousness of the self is reflected in the mythical-religious sphere.

a. Demonic powers. When man first places himself as an independent being in opposition to what is around him, it is only in terms of his emotional reaction to the impressions that come to him. The "powers" pressing upon him evoke feelings.[2] Those things "are" for him which affect him emotionally. Even his own power of words is projected as something alien and demonic. What he will later identify as his own subjectivity is something that now seems to come at him from the outside and to possess him. If there are "gods," they are momentary and fleeting. It is more appropriate to call those forces "demonic powers." At least the consciousness is beginning to make a response and is not simply passively accepting what comes to it.[3]

b. Specialized gods. Then man moves from reaction to action. He begins to shape the world around him. Instruments extend his powers and themselves interpret the corresponding parts of his own body. Through his action his world becomes increasingly articulated. Specialized gods are related to very specific activity which is carried out by man. Man comes to understand his own activity by removing it from himself and projecting it outward. Now the gods are different from the diffuse forces of nature. Functional gods appear as bringers of light and salvation. Though man is still enmeshed in nature and understands his destinies to be interwoven with its fate, there are dimensions of freedom emerging which had not been known before. Greater differentiation in his own self-understanding is developing out of the increased differentiation of his labor and out of the objects created by this labor.[1]

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[1] Ibid., p. 265.

[2] Compare van der Leeuw, Religion in Essence and Manifestation, I, 24-28.

[3] Ibid., III, 90, and II, 157-163 and 200-201; also Cassirer, Language and Myth, p. 18.

c. Creator god. Though the creation is first considered to be the work of one of the occupational gods (e.g., potter or carver), the movement is toward a creation by "word" and "out of nothing." This constitutes a corresponding awareness in the individual's sense of his own person, an understanding of pure will and pure action. An ethical dimension of responsibility emerges for the "self." He is accountable for his actions. The freely creating god is the counter-part of a similar quality of man. Prayer and sacrifice are not so much communication between man and god as a function for establishing the meaning of the two extremes and bringing both into being.[2]

d. "One in many." One further development is mentioned only briefly. It is the mystical sense of subjectivity which rises above the objective world of mere appearances so that individual self is caught up into the unity of all being.[3]

D. Priority of Orientation

Cassirer, it is now obvious, treats the emergence of the self and the person's orientation in the world as one facet of the form-giving character of the symbolic function. If Cassirer's position were to be accepted without qualification, the symbolic function of orientation could be regarded as one instance of its form-giving function, and this chapter would be nothing more than a postscript to the first.

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[1] Ibid., II, 201-206 and 213-217; also Cassirer, Language and Myth, pp. 19-20.

[2] Ibid., pp. 210-11 and 229-31; also Cassirer, Language and Myth, p. 21.

[3] Ibid., pp. 173 and 253.

However, while Cassirer has illuminated some important facets of the orientation function, his fundamental position that orientation is only one example of form-giving is not adequate to deal with Eliade's observations that the orientation function plays the key role in human survival and effective action by men.

Cassirer sees the form-giving function as a fundamental principle of the human spirit, and for him the human spirit is spoken of in Hegelian fashion as a general movement of consciousness. He leaves the impression that the formation of the individual person or society is but one incidental happenstance in a grand movement which goes far beyond such a trivial event.

It is illuminating that for Cassirer the supreme revelation of the symbolic function is a mathematical symbol. This manifests the "pure relation,"[1] free from the world of objects and entirely unambiguous.

For all his pleading that the symbolic function is rooted in concrete experience, Cassirer portrays its fullest manifestation as being delivered from those crude beginnings.[2] Cassirer's pure symbolic function is free not only of the material world but also of ambiguity. The highest achievement of the progress of the human spirit is the precise delineation of a single, unambiguous relation understood without reference to any object or experience. The aspiration of the movement of consciousness is toward precision[1] and "absolute truth."[2]

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[1] *Ibid.*, I, 303.

[2] *Ibid.*, III, 354.

The spirit of nineteenth century evolutionism becomes evident in such a summary of Cassirer's work. There is a progressive movement in a single direction from what is diffuse and primitive to what is precise and contemporary.

It is this inclination of Cassirer to find the culmination of the human enterprise in the paradise of precision which makes it necessary to move beyond Cassirer in order to discover the full dimensions of symbolic activity.

Eliade's concern with the symbolic function as orientation moves in quite a different direction. For him the symbolic function is being exercised most magnificently when it establishes man's sense of who he is, when it gives significance or meaning to life, and when it provides a foundation for effective decisions and action by man in the world. That function is exercised with every bit as much force in the mythologies of ancient peoples as it is in the symbols of our own time. In fact, the emphasis of Eliade is that we would do well to recover some of the richness of those mythological symbols in order to tap these rich sources for the orientation of human life and activity.

Such an emphasis on orientation need not eliminate precise concepts, as those in mathematical formulae, from the picture. They can still be recognized as remarkable and highly specialized applications of the fundamental process by which man is oriented in the world. They cultivate one aspect of that process in important and productive ways. However, their capacity for contributing to the emergence of the self and to the life of meaning and value is limited because they lack the rich texture necessary to usher life toward its fulness.

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[1] Ibid., I, 280.

[2] Ibid., III, 284; above, p.46.

For this dissertation priority is given to the orientation function, following the lead of Eliade. Cassirer's contribution of the form-giving function is retained. However, the fullest expression of form-giving is understood as the shaping of man's life in the world rather than as the precise formulation of a pure relation.

Whether the form-giving quality of the symbolic function culminates in orientation or in theoretic statements of pure relation depends upon whether the symbolic function is considered multivalent or univocal, the issue for the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

THE SYMBOLIC FUNCTION AS MULTIVALENT

The third quality of the symbolic function to be considered is multivalence. Eliade specifically identifies it in his work:

> Images by their very structure are multivalent . . . . It is therefore the image as such, as a whole bundle of meanings, that is true, and not any one of its meanings, nor one alone of its many frames of reference. To translate an image into a concrete terminology by restricting it to any one of its frames of reference is to do worse than mutilate it -- it is to annihilate, to annul it as an instrument of cognition.[1]

What Eliade so affirms, he does not analyze nor explicate with the care and precision used by Paul Ricoeur. It is to him that we turn for a careful exposition of multivalence.

A. Double Meaning

"Double meaning" is the key term in Ricoeur's study of Freud and Philosophy.[2] He introduces it succinctly. A double meaning occurs when

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[1] Eliade, Images and Symbols, p. 15; the same point is made by Eliade in The Two and the One, p. 202, and in The Sacred and the Profane, p. 149.

[2] It should be stated clearly that the purpose of this treatment of Freud and Philosophy is not to provide a summary of his main line of argument. That is a study of the dynamics of interpretation based on an excavation of Freud's work on three different levels of understanding. The first is man as Conscious, Preconscious and Unconscious. The second portrays man in the interaction of Ego, Id, and Superego. The third sees human experience as the struggle between Eros and Ananke. No exposition is made here of this interesting interpretation of Freud. Ricoeur uses the notion of double meaning as his primary tool in conducting this excavation. The purpose of this analysis of Ricoeur is to see what happens to the tool in the process of the exploration. This calls for a highly selective use of Ricoeur's material with the expectation that it will yield rich results for an understanding of double meaning, and, hence, of multivalence.

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"another meaning is both given and hidden in an immediate meaning."[1] In those few words lies the key to the book. They make it clear that a symbol carries more than one meaning or valence.

1. Valence and multivalence

Besides its use in the description of symbols, the term "valence" is used by scientists to describe the number of atomic weights with which the atomic weight of a particular element will combine. It has to do with the bonds or connections which the atom of one element may make with others. The atoms of those elements which have many such bonds are called "multivalent."

Similarly, in the case of symbolic functioning, an image which makes connections with a number of other aspects of human experience is many-valenced or "multivalent" whereas one which presents only itself without relation to anything else has no valences at all to support it.

Each valence which an image bears is an association with some other area of experience. It taps the taut cords of some aspect of life -- whether it be an instinctual drive, an historical event, a personal tragedy, a communal ritual, or a childhood delight. It resonates with such aspects of life. It suggests, evokes, amplifies, and enriches them, and is itself strengthened and given added significance by the interaction.

According to Cassirer, the valent function becomes evident at the level of representation, when one element of experience points beyond itself both to other elements of experience and also to the full Gestalt in which the total experience is being received. He includes those images which carry only one valence as functioning symbolically, but he also has multivalent signification in his work. There are explicit references to it. For instance, he writes that " . . . every particular content of consciousness is situated in a network of diverse relations, by virtue of which its single existence and self-representation contain reference to other and still other contents"[1] and also that "every beat [of consciousness] strikes a thousand connections."[2] Yet, nowhere does he clearly focus on this rich quality of symbolization nor begin to give it the attention which Ricoeur does. Cassirer concentrates on valence, Ricoeur on multivalence.

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[1] Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 7.

Ricoeur contends that to use the term "symbol" to include images with single valences as well as those with double images, as Cassirer does, makes it impossible to give the necessary attention to the multivalent quality of the symbol which is the distinctive character of the symbol and provides it with its rich and distinctive character.[3]

Yet, the difference is over more than how wide an application shall be given to the term "symbol." Cassirer's entire project is a movement from the diffuse and undifferentiated to the precise and clearly differentiated. His process of objectivization culminates in the clear and unambiguous symbols of mathematics and symbolic logic--beyond the realm of language.[4] The culmination of the scheme comes in univocal meaning. The representative function is seen most clearly where one sign stands for only one meaning--the single valence. This is the realm of pure relation, of ideal formation. It is the determinate mode of objectivization reaching

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[1] Ibid., I, 106.

[2] Ibid., III, 203.

[3] Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 11.

[4] Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, III, 341 and 110.

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its fulfillme[illegible] What is fulfillment for Cassirer is barren and empty for Ricoeur.

Sy[illegible]ic logic, which is given such preeminence by Cassirer, stands in sharp contrast to multivalence. The purpose of the logician in establishing a symbol for a logical operation is to make certain that it has one unambiguous meaning. All equivocation is to be eliminated in favor of univocal meaning.[2] The result is clarity and precision, but it is exactly the opposite of the multivalent symbol which is rich and interesting and powerful just because it is not confined to a single meaning.[3] Multivalence is equivocal. Yet, though it first appears ambiguous and confusing because it cannot be "explained" or "controlled," it emerges later as the factor with great resources and significance for human life and thought.[4] Not the univocal symbol of the logician but the plurivocal symbol of the believer and of the poet is in touch with sensual experience as well as with thought and meaning.

2. Aristotle and Brown

Ricoeur's insistence on multivalence finds support from a variety of sources. He himself appeals first to Aristotle. Aristotle clearly stressed the importance of univocality: "Not to have one meaning is to have no meaning."[5] Yet, in that same work, the *Metaphysics*, the Greek philosopher refers

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 383.

[2] Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, p. 17.

[3] "The man who speaks in symbols is first of all a narrator; he transmits an abundance of meaning over which he has little command. Interpretation [of this abundance] consists less in suppressing ambiguity than in understanding it and in explicating its richness." Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy*, p. 49.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 48-54; also Ricoeur, *Symbolism of Evil*, p. 349.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

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to "the many meanings of being"[1] and to "being said in several ways."[2] Even Aristotle pointed in the direction of pluri-vocality.

What is only hinted in Aristotle is celebrated in Norman O. Brown's Love's Body. He insists that when language is confined to a single meaning, as in Protestant literalism, it is robbed of its power:[3] "Literalism makes the world of abstract materialism, of dead matter, . . . kills everything, . . . makes a universe of stone."[4] Though the letter kills when closed within itself, it can break out into new life when opened to its symbolic quality of multivalence.

> A symbol is never a symbol but always polysymbolic, over-determined, polymorphous, Freedom is fertility; a proliferation of images, in excess. The seed must be sown, wastefully, extravagantly. Too much, or not enough. . .[5]

Out of the profusion of meaning borne by the symbol comes Transfiguration and Resurrection, announces Brown.[6] The multivalence in which he rejoices stands in stark contrast to the univocal quality of literalism and symbolic logic, and in close alliance with Ricoeur's emphasis on multiple meaning.

3. Tones and overtones

The terminology has shifted now from "double" meaning to "multiple-" meaning. For analytic purposes it is helpful to speak of a double meaning because that offers a way of clarifying that a further meaning is given in and through the immediate meaning. Yet, it would be a mistake to limit the symbolic function to two meanings. A symbol may resonate on many levels. The richer the symbol the more it will echo and re-echo in the halls of human experience.

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[1] Ibid., p. 53.

[2] Ibid., p. 23.

[3] Norman O. Brown, Love's Body (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 192.

[4] Ibid., p. 223.

[5] Ibid., p. 248.

[6] Ibid., pp. 191-214.

A symbol is like a cymbal, or, perhaps better, like a gong. The sound of a gong, like other musical sounds has both a basic pitch or tone and also overtones. These overtones are dependent upon the basic tone and resonate out from it, but they also support and enrich that primary note. Overtones resound on a variety of intervals--thirds, fifths, and octaves. While all musical tones have some overtones, the gong is particularly rich with them, and they are readily heard by even the untutored ear. The making of a gong is an art, and each gong has its distinctive range and quality of overtones depending on its construction.

In a similar way, a symbol strikes not only the primary tone. It is a symbol (as a gong is a gong) because in addition to that tone it echoes with overtones which resonate on many different levels. The variety of overtones or levels of meaning which a symbol has is affected by the context in which it is struck, but the symbol has an independent capacity of its own for "ringing bells" in situations and ways which could not be predicted or described apart from the symbol itself just as overtones are present only by virtue of the striking of the fundamental tone. Exactly how far the reverberations of the gong extend cannot be predicted by the artist who creates the gong until he actually strikes it and discovers its range. Symbols have a similar unique character. The symbol itself must demonstrate the variety of levels at which it will resonate. In the case of symbols which are rich enough to give orientation to a man's life the overtones reverberate on so many levels that they are found echoing both in those private compartments at the heart of a person's life and also at those distant borders as far as we can hear--and we suspect beyond our range to territories we have not yet tapped.

Such is the multivalent or plurivocal quality of symbols which gives them a texture of sufficient richness and a tensility of sufficient strength to give coherence and interest to a person's life.

B. Literal and Emergent Meaning

What is the nature of the two meanings Ricoeur has in mind in his "double meanings"? Ricoeur seems to answer that question on two different levels of understanding without explicitly distinguishing between the two. They are to be found alongside each other throughout the work. Both are present in the statement quoted earlier: "another meaning is both given and hidden in an immediate meaning."[1]

At this first level of interpretation the distinction is between the "immediate meaning" and "another meaning." This polarity runs throughout the book. There is a "primary meaning" and a "secondary meaning." Sometimes the comparison is between a "literal and manifest meaning" which is immediate and a subsequent meaning which emerges out of the first one and is dependent upon it.[2] The terminology is not consistent, but the terms "literal" and "emergent" in the heading above represent these two poles.

The two meanings understood in this way have a parallel in the work of Cassirer. He sometimes distinguishes between the content of a phenomenon

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[1] Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 7.

[2] Ibid., p. 12.

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and the "representative" function that it exercises.[1] At other times he separates the "sensual factor" from the "spiritual factor" in perception.[2] In each case the first aspect of the experience corresponds roughly to Ricoeur's "primary meaning" and the second to that function which points beyond the first to "another meaning." (Cassirer, of course, is very careful not to imply any causal or temporal relation as though the first precedes the second. The distinction is for the purpose of analysis and to isolate the symbolic function. If either is to be considered primary or "earlier" for Cassirer, it would have to be the representational or spiritual aspect.)[3]

Alfred Schutz had earlier elaborated on a concept similar to this level of interpretation of Ricoeur's double meaning. He built his explication on a double base. One was Husserl's term, "appresentation."[4] This was the phenomenologist's way of stating that when a person looks at something, what comes to him is not only the "presentation" of the face of the object but also, together with this presentation, some expectations of the back side of the object. Those further expectations given in the immediate surface presentation represent the "appresentational" aspect of viewing. The other base is William James' concept of "sub-universes."[5] The most common of these in Schutz's application is the arena of everyday life with the commonly accepted understandings which cause it to make sense. However, there are a great many others as well--games, art, religion, politics, science, etc.[1]

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[1] Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, III, 128.

[2] Ibid., III, 134 and 93, and I, 110.

[3] Ibid., III, 135.

[4] Alfred Schutz, Collected Works, No. I, Phaenomenologia, Vol. XI, ed. Maurice Natanson (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1962), p. 295.

[5] Ibid., p. 341.

A symbol, according to Schutz, is based in the concreteness of everyday life. That is the first "finite province of meaning" in which it functions. If it were to remain there, however, it would not exercise a symbolic function at all. However, as it points beyond that first "finite province of meaning" to some other "finite province of meaning," it takes on its symbolic character.[2] The second realm of meaning is given in the first (appresentation).

This terminology developed by Alfred Schutz offers an appropriate vehicle for an exposition of Ricoeur's two meanings at this first level of understanding.

1. Rooted in concrete experience

The first finite province of meaning is the literal and manifest sense. It is the "immediate meaning" taken from "everyday experience."[3] Schutz calls this the world of everyday life.[4] Ricoeur speaks of it as the "sensible meaning."[5] For Cassirer it is the "sensual factor."[6]

When symbols are understood as multivalent, they do not lose their grounding in this first province of meaning. They remain rooted in the concrete, down-to-earth experiences of everyday life. Eliade says it clearly:

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 329.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 343.

[3] Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy*, pp. 7 and 13.

[4] Schutz, *Collected Works, No. I*, p. 326.

[5] Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy*, p. 31.

[6] Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, III, 134.

> The Hindu who, embracing his wife, declares that she is Earth and he Heaven is at the same time fully conscious of his humanity and hers. . . . Cosmic symbolism adds a new value to an object or action, without affecting their peculiar and immediate values.[1]

Tillich points out that the world of everyday, far from being diminished when it exercises a symbol function is actually enhanced in its concrete and immediate existence: "If God is called the 'king,' something is said not only about God but also about the holy character of kinghood."[2] It is Tillich again who made it clear that we should not speak of "only a symbol."[3] When an element of everyday experience takes on symbolic meaning, it is not reduced but becomes "larger than life." The symbolic function has not removed it from its immediate province of meaning. The multivalent quality of a symbol enables it to remain rooted in its primary mode.

Ricoeur is explicit about this matter. "Symbols are bound," he states.

> The sensible sign is bound by the symbolic meaning that dwells in it and gives it transparency and lightness; the symbolic meaning is in turn bound to its sensible vehicle, which gives it weight and opacity. One might add that this is also the way symbols bind us, viz. by giving thought a content, a flesh, a density.[4]

In this passage the "sensible sign" and the "symbolic meaning" constitute the double meaning. Here it is clear that the symbol not only tolerates a valence or connection to its primary meaning but is dependent upon it for its power. The multivalent symbol is rooted in the earth, in flesh, Incarnation.

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[1] Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, pp. 166-67; also Eliade, Images and Symbols, pp. 84 and 178.

[2] Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, I, 241.

[3] Paul Tillich, Dynamics of Faith, p. 45.

[4] Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 49.

2. Pointing beyond concrete experience

But what is the second element of this double meaning? Ricoeur identifies it simply as "another meaning"[1] and Schutz as the "other province of meaning." The reason that this second meaning is not designated any more specifically than that is to keep it open-ended.

Ricoeur is careful to say that the "other meaning" is designated and attainable only "in and through the first intentionality."[2] "The second meaning somehow dwells in the first meaning."[3] A concrete illustration of this is offered in Ricoeur's treatment of fault in The Symbolism of Evil. It is the experience of stain in everyday experience that creates the possibility of understanding and confessing fault as a defilement of the spirit, a spiritual stain.[4] The key statement, repeated several times by Ricoeur, is that "the symbolic meaning is constituted in and through the literal meaning which achieves the analogy by giving the analogue."[5] The second meaning is not given in any way except through the first one. Richardson concurs in his discussion of myth when he writes that "the reality that myth symbolizes is evoked by the myth itself and cannot be experienced apart from it."[6] It is this capacity of a symbol to give a double meaning which makes the "other province of meaning" possible. For that reason it is appropriate to keep the reference to the second meaning quite open-ended. The reverberations of the first meaning echo into the second meaning in ways which create and define their own amplitude.[1]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 7 and 16.

[2] Ibid., p. 16.

[3] Ibid., p. 31.

[4] Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, p. 15.

[5] Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 17; also Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, p. 15; compare also p. 41.

[6] Herbert W. Richardson, Toward an American Theology (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1967), p. 69.

Another reason for keeping the second meaning open is that such a wide range of "finite provinces of meaning" (Ricoeur calls them "zones of emergence" at one point[2]) has been constituted at the level of second meaning that to identify it with any one of these provinces would be to limit its fulness. Schutz uses science and poetry as two extended examples of the "other meaning," and Ricoeur's most frequent references are to the realms of thought and of the sacred.

a. Thought. Susanne Langer carefully makes the point that the expressive mode of thought, which is characteristic of symbolic understanding, has a distinctive role in human life and that it is as legitimate as discursive thought.[3] Ricoeur goes farther than that. It is his thesis that the realm of discursive thought grows out of symbols and is entirely dependent upon the symbolic function. "The symbol gives rise to thought" serves as his key phrase.[4]

In the context of the present discussion of "double meaning" the realm of thought corresponds to the "other province." This other province is called forth or constituted by the symbol as it points beyond its immediate and manifest meaning to another meaning. It is the multivalent

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[1] Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 31.

[2] Ibid., p. 13.

[3] Susanne K. Langer, Philosophy in a New Key (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1951), p. 127.

[4] Ricoeur cites Kant's Critique of Judgment as the source for this phrase in Freud and the Philosophers, p. 38.

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quality of the symbol, its capacity of referring beyond itself, which makes the world of reflection possible.[1]

This is illustrated first by the fact that symbols call for interpretation. "Wherever a man dreams or raves, another man rises to give an interpretation."[2] Similarly, "symbols give . . . ; but this gift creates for me the duty to think, to inaugurate philosophic discourse, starting from what is always prior to and the foundation of that discourse."[3] Interpretation comes not as an external exercise imposed on symbols but as an activity which the very character of the symbol requires and elicits.

There is no interpretation prior to symbols, no "general hermeneutic" which is located in some objective position exempt from dependence upon a symbol.[4] The symbol establishes the basis for an interpretation. The task of the philosopher itself is "unavoidably oriented" in his Greek heritage.[5] No philosophy is without presuppositions.[6]

Therefore, any hermeneutics becomes the task of making explicit the prior understanding which gave rise to that particular interpretation in the first place.[7] The battle between interpretations is rooted in the diversity of symbols, each establishing its distinctive perspective and calling into question other perspectives.[8] "Every symbol is iconoclastic in comparison with some other symbol."[1] The field of interpretation is further complicated by another aspect of the multivalent character of symbols, which is that any one symbol is likely to evoke more than one meaning, so that there are varieties of interpretation of one symbol in addition to the varieties created by the diversity of symbols.

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[1] Ricoeur, Freud and the Philosophers, p. 495.

[2] Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, p. 350; compare also p. 19.

[3] Ricoeur, Freud and the Philosophers, p. 38.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 55.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 38; also Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, p. 20.

[6] Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, p. 348.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 352. Compare also H. Richard Niebuhr, The Meaning of Revelation, pp. 26, 27, and 60.

[8] Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, pp. 47 and 55.

Ricoeur proposes that the impact of symbols on the world of thought goes beyond the field of hermeneutics even to the activity of speculative thought.[2] Symbols not only offer a starting point for interpretation, but they also offer a "meaningful totality," a "world view."[3] The task of philosophic reflection is not to "find a disguised philosophy in the garments of the myth" but to discover, promote, enhance, and inform by means of a creative interpretation the meaning offered by the symbol.[4] This is inherent in the symbol and is not added to the symbol by philosophy. It is the multivalent quality of the symbol which extends its range to the whole of things. The task of speculative reflection is to thematize this universality and to reflect about the order it offers.

Without the resource of symbols the task of reflection is empty and abstract. "The density of the symbol gives food for thought."[5] It recharges the sources of supply on which reflective thought must draw.[6] Thinking of itself does not make the man. "It remains as abstract and empty as it is invincible; it has to be 'mediated' by the ideas, actions, works, institutions, and monuments that objectify it."[1] Reflection is dependent upon the symbols. That is where it begins. "To start from a pregiven symbolism. . . is to give oneself something to think about."[2] And it never exhausts this rich supply nor gets beyond it. "There is always more in myths and symbols than in all our philosophy."[3]

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[1] Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, p. 354.

[2] Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, pp. 38-40.

[3] Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, p. 170.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 355.

[5] Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 49.

[6] Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, p. 353.

Thus, the double meaning of Ricoeur, which is rooted in its first meaning in the everyday world, points beyond that to "another meaning" and in the process opens up and brings into existence another province of meaning, in this instance the realm of interpretation and reflective thought.

b. The sacred. The sacred is a second realm toward which symbols point and one which receives the careful attention of Ricoeur. Like the realm of thought it belongs to the "other meaning," the second in the double meaning which characterizes symbols. Like the symbols which give rise to thought, the symbols which characterize this realm are rooted in the everyday world.

> The concretion in the thing [the sky is the example he is using of such a 'thing'] is the counterpart of the surcharge of inexhaustible meaning which has ramifications in the cosmic, in the ethical, and in the political. Thus, the symbol-thing is the potentiality of innumerable spoken symbols which, on the other hand, are knotted together in a single cosmic manifestation.[4]

The double meaning of the symbol remains anchored in the concrete experience of everyday life. However, the "other meaning" arises as such a multiplicity of associations is evoked and "innumerable" symbols appear until an

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[1] Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 43.

[2] Ibid., p. 47.

[3] Ibid., p. 527; also Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, p. 163.

[4] Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, p. 11.

"inexhaustible meaning" develops out of one "manifest and literal meaning." Such is the multivalent character of symbols: rooted in concrete experience and opening up to the fartherest horizon of human life and experience, to realms that cannot be predicted or controlled from any point outside of the symbolic function itself.

A crucial issue, and one which tests the limits of the multivalent character of symbols, is whether Ricoeur is proposing that the realm of the sacred is constituted by the symbolic function as is the activity of reflective thought, or whether a transcendent "external" power uses the rich potential of the symbol as a way of showing itself to men?

In The Symbolism of Evil Ricoeur speaks of symbolism as "manifestations of the sacred, [as] hierophanies, where the sacred is shown in a fragment of the cosmos."[1] Or he says that "the sacred takes contingent forms."[2] Such statements seem to indicate that the sacred is a separate and external realm which utilizes symbols to display itself to men.

Yet, it is in the same context that Ricoeur carefully states that this manifestation of the sacred is really the same as the symbol exercising its signifying powers: "It is the same thing to say that the sky manifests the sacred and to say that it signifies the most high, the elevated and the immense, the powerful and the orderly, the clairvoyant and the wise, the sovereign, the immutable."[3] Another element comes into the picture, however, in Ricoeur's most recent book, Freud and Philosophy. It is most dramatically introduced with his reference to the Wholly Other (acknowledging

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[1] Ibid., pp. 10-11.

[2] Ibid., p. 169.

[3] Ibid., p. 11.

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his debt to Karl Barth).[1] "Symbols designate the impact on culture of a reality that the movement of cultures does not contain; they speak of the Wholly Other, of the Wholly Other than all of history."[2] Such an Other seems to come from outside of signifying activity of symbols and to use them as ways of making contact with human experience.

So Ricoeur in the same context speaks of the "call" which is addressed to man.[3] It is a word, a kerygma, presented to man in a way which calls him to "leave off all demands and listen."[4] Again the passive role of man who lives "in expectancy" of such a new Word supports the emphasis of the Wholly Other.[5]

Finally, the intriguing use Ricoeur makes of the notion of horizon confirms this theme. "Horizon is the metaphor for what approaches without ever becoming a possessed object."[6] The dimension of the sacred is "the meaningful bearer of what we described as the structure of horizon peculiar to the Wholly Other which draws near."[7] Symbols are "sentinels of the horizon."[8]

Ricoeur calls on these three images in his attempt to get at the "radical origin of religious symbolism." They represent another pole in this issue of transcendence. However, it does not represent a dramatic shift of

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[1] Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 525.

[2] Ibid., p. 529.

[3] Ibid., p. 525.

[4] Ibid., p. 551.

[5] Ibid., p. 31.

[6] Ibid., p. 526.

[7] Ibid., p. 531.

[8] Ibid., p. 530.

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Ricoeur's position on the subject from his work on The Symbolism of Evil.

In this concluding section of Freud and Philosophy, Ricoeur is not contrasting the revelatory and transcendent quality of the Wholly Other with the multivalency of the symbolic function but with reflective thought. He is contending that a person cannot arrive at the radical origin of faith by a philosophy of reflection, even when it is understood in the broader terms of Hegel's phenomenology of spirit. The horizon that lies beyond lies beyond the bounds that reflection can reach in searching out both origins and destiny.[1] It is reflection and not the symbols of the sacred which can only salute the horizon "as that which quietly presents itself from afar."[2] The call is addressed to me from outside the realm of conceptual thought.[3] The realm of the sacred, of the Wholly Other, calls into question the aspiration of reflection for absolute knowledge.

We are brought back to the point made in the previous section on the realm of thought: "There is always more in myths and symbols than in all our philosophy."[4] That something more, that remainder is represented in Ricoeur both by the Wholly Other and also by the multivalent character of symbols. It is precisely the mytho-poetic quality of the symbol that gives it the capacity to address man with a call to leave all and follow.[5]

One further link between the transcendent and the multivalent is the sense of being caught up into the sacred. The multivalent quality of the symbol, like the experience of transcendence, has the effect of drawing the person into the vortex of its movement.[1] This striking passage is referring to the movement from the primary and literal meaning to the "other meaning:"

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[1] Ibid., p. 526.

[2] Ibid., p. 527.

[3] Ibid., p. 525.

[4] Ibid., p. 527.

[5] Ibid., p. 551.

> The movement that draws me toward the second meaning assimilates me to what is said, makes me participate in what is announced to me. The similitude in which the force of symbols resides and from which they draw their revealing power is not an objective likeness, which I may look upon like a relation laid out before me; it is an existential assimilation, according to the movement of analogy, of my being to being.[2]

This involvement of the person in the symbolic movement is what makes the symbol powerful enough to give orientation to a man's life. It may be interpreted either as a transcendent call coming from beyond his person or as being caught up in the movement of a symbol from one meaning to another. Both are at the horizon beyond the grasp of reflective thought. Out there on this horizon it becomes difficult to distinguish between where the sea ends and where the sky begins. Once again multivalence and transcendence are found in close affinity.

C. Archeology and Teleology

"Another meaning is both given and hidden in an immediate meaning." The key sentence returns to invite a second level of understanding. At this level the attention is centered on the "given" and the "hidden" as the two foci in the double meaning.

The task now, however, is not to decide whether it is the given or the hidden meaning which is to be associated with the immediate meaning. The second level of meaning is not an orderly progression from the first. Instead, the second interpretation explodes out of the first and in the process

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[1] Compare Norman O. Brown in Love's Body: "In symbolist poetry the reader is incorporated into the work, actively participates in the poetic process itself -- the connection is left for the beholder to work out for himself. All the Lord's people become prophets," p. 246; above, p. 67.

[2] Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 31.

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transforms the understanding of the double meaning.

1. The dispossession of consciousness

To break through to this second level of understanding it is necessary to shatter the grip of immediate consciousness. It calls for breaking beyond the "province of everyday life" which was so fundamental to Schutz's scheme. The given and hidden meanings are to be found somewhere in the open-endedness of that "other" meaning and not in the "literal and manifest" meaning which is known directly and immediately.

The displacement of the watchful consciousness is a project shared by a wide range of modern figures. Marx was concerned with shattering the false consciousness of men, and nothing less than a demystification by means of action would suffice.[1] The task of phenomenology begins with the "humiliation or wounding of the knowledge belonging to immediate consciousness."[2] Tillich represents a movement in theology which is concerned with the depth dimension of human experience.[3] (Such theology cannot be understood in isolation from a broader religious experience characterized by the loss of "immediacy of belief" and by increasing difficulty with the "literal and manifest meaning" of religious expression.)[4] Among all these, however, Freud stands as the master of all who would destroy the illusions of man's conscious existence. It is to his work that Ricoeur turns to explore the regions beyond the immediate consciousness.

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[1] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, The German Ideology (1846) (New York: International Publishers, 1970), p. 37.

[2] Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 377.

[3] Paul Tillich, Theology of Culture (London: Oxford University Press, 1959, 1968), pp. 5-9.

[4] Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, p. 351.

For Freud, as for the others attempting to break through the immediate consciousness, this project is not an attempt to destroy all meaning but a recognition that the home of meaning is to be found somewhere other than in consciousness.[1]

Ricoeur does not see this relinquishing of the immediate consciousness as the last word. He undertakes the project with the expectation that it will result in a reappropriation of consciousness and an extension of it.[2] Consciousness can then be recaptured through its own signs.[3] Still, that return is not to be premature but more in the manner of the return journey of Odysseus, through the labyrinthian passages of the sea.

2. The "hidden" and the "given"

When meanings are considered to be "hidden" and "given," then symbols are regarded as disguising what is hidden and revealing what is given.[4] The disguising is usually done with reference to the past, and the revealing points to the future. The first is regressive, concerned with what has gone before, and its very attempt to conceal it draws attention to it and repeats it.[5] The second is progressive, triumphing over the repetition of the past and opening up forward.[6] Dreams characterize the first. They represent wish fulfillment, looking backward toward infancy.[7] They are "a regressive symbol of man's unresolved conflicts."[1] Art represents the second. "The work of art goes ahead of the artist; it is a prospective symbol of his personal synthesis and of man's future."[2]

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[1] Ricoeur, _Freud and Philosophy_, pp. 55 and 34.

[2] _Ibid._, p. 55.

[3] _Ibid._, p. 431.

[4] _Ibid._, pp. 18 and 497.

[5] _Ibid._, p. 342.

[6] _Ibid._, p. 173.

[7] _Ibid._, p. 91.

These two functions of symbols call for different interpretations. As the symbol disguises hidden meaning the task of interpretation is an "exercise of suspicion."[3] The symbol is a cipher to be decoded.[4] Demystification is the work to be accomplished.[5] Interpretation is the reduction of illusion and the unmasking of repression.[6] This interpretive task, pursuing the symbols as they point backward, is archeology.

By contrast, as the symbol reveals meaning which cannot be known apart from it, the goal of interpretation becomes a "restoration of the fullness of meaning."[7] The symbols give the meaning, so the interpreter is called to listen to them and to be obedient to their voice.[8] This task of interpretation is not to struggle against the stubborn symbol which is reluctant to make its secret known but instead to "set free the interplay of references between the signs."[9] That second work of interpretation follows the symbols as they direct man's attention forward. It is teleology.

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[1] _Ibid_., p. 175.

[2] _Ibid_.

[3] _Ibid_., p. 32.

[4] _Ibid_., p. 33.

[5] _Ibid_., p. 27.

[6] _Ibid_., pp. 9, 54, and 177.

[7] _Ibid_., pp. 9 and 54.

[8] _Ibid_., p. 27.

[9] _Ibid_., p. 177.

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3. The movement of archeology

In his careful exposition of Freud, Ricoeur follows Freud in his archeological project. Symbols are regarded as instruments of regression, disguising the well of desire. "Symbolic language is conceived as a 'secret code;' dream interpretation as the work of deciphering it."[1]

The underlying contents to be discovered by the work of interpretation "are monotonous -- they are always the same things: the genitals, sexual processes, sexual intercourse."[2] "In dreams symbols are used almost exclusively for the expression of sexual objects and relations."[3] This applies to cultural symbols as well as to the private world of dream symbolism. Totem and Taboo interprets the symbols of culture (taboo prohibitions and totemic kinship) as being grounded in an Oedipal complex which was actually acted out at some time in the past in the slaying of the father and the eating of the totem meal.[4] "The beginnings of religion, ethics, society, and art meet in the Oedipus complex."[5] In Lecture X of Freud's Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis he supposes that language had its origin in sexual symbols for the purpose of summoning the speaker's sexual partner.[6]

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[1] Erich Fromm, The Forgotten Language (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1957), p. 68.

[2] Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 499.

[3] Sigmund Freud, Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis (1916-17), The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press, 1961), XV, 166.

[4] Sigmund Freud, Totem and Taboo, trans. A. A. Brill (New York: Random House [Vintage Books], 1918, 1946), p. 183.

[5] Ibid., p. 202.

[6] Cited in Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 501.

Freud's disciple, Ernest Jones, seems to summarize this interpretation of symbols in his contention that the sexual is always signified, and never signifier.[1] At this point the stereotype of Freud seems to be confirmed. He is a reductionist who sees a phallic symbol in every convex shape and a vaginal figure in every concave one. It is understandable that men like Jung would find it necessary to break away from seeing every image as a sexual allegory in order to pursue richer possibilities of multivalent symbols.[2] Ricoeur seems to have chosen a strange mine to go prospecting for the wealth of symbolic multivalence. Nevertheless, he pursues Freud through to the end.

His diligence is rewarded by his discovery that even within Freud's archeological interpretations there is more than simple reductionism. In his earlier work, especially in the "Project for a Scientific Psychology" in 1895, Freud offers quite a mechanical description of the psyche. It is based on models from physics and gives prominence to such qualities as force and energy in describing man's instincts. With such models the goals of instinctual energy is to establish some balance or equilibrium between the various forces. Yet, Freud came to recognize that there was no way to get at bare, unadorned instinct except through some symbolic representation of it.

> An instinct can never become an object of consciousness -- only the idea that represents the instinct can. Even in the unconscious, moreover, an instinct cannot be represented otherwise than by an idea. If the instinct did not attach itself to an idea or manifest itself as an affective state, we could know nothing about it.[3]

This is demonstrated, for example, through the sequences of representatives associated with the death instinct--masochism, sadism, melancholia, and the fear of castration.[1] This is a critical point for Ricoeur. The realm of desire can be recognized only in "its derivatives, in the density and at the borderline of the signifying."[2] The "indirect discourse of that mute darkness [the realm of desire] are such symbols as dreams and fantasies."[3] Freud looks to "pictorial representation" as a signifying power expressive of the instincts and operating prior to language.[4] Ricoeur, however, with his characteristic emphasis on language, insists that already on this level there must be something comparable to language.[5]

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[1] Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 504n.

[2] Jung, Man and His Symbols, p. 29.

[3] Sigmund Freud, "The Unconscious," Standard Edition, XIV, 177.

> The dynamics referring to desire -- or energetics, or even hydraulics -- is articulated only in a semantics: the 'vicissitudes of instincts,' to use one of Freud's expressions, can be attained only in the vicissitudes of meaning.[6]

Furthermore, it is not only that instincts cannot be communicated to the consciousness but also that the energies themselves are not exercised otherwise even on the unconscious level.[7]

Whether the symbolic representation of instincts functions as pictorial images or as language, the results for the understanding of symbols are the same. Once Freud grants that instinctual energies are accessible only through symbolic representatives the balance or equilibrium of that energy can be worked out only "on the interplay between the signifier and the signified."[1] Suddenly the reductionist implications in Freud are exploded into the full richness and complexity of symbolic interaction.

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[1] Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, pp. 297-302.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 454 and 429.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 458.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 398.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 400. Jacques Lacan is in the forefront of concern for the primary role of language in psychoanalysis as is demonstrated in his essay, "The Function of Language in Psychoanalysis," pp. 55 and 86.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 46.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 403n.

Ricoeur arrives at multiple symbolic meanings, not by opposing Freud but by going all the way with Freud in his archeological task of interpretation. There, at the fartherest frontiers of Freud's probing, at the primordial depths of the instinctual energies, comes the recognition that the interpreter still has not broken past symbols to some reality which lies beneath them.

As though to exhume even the last remnants of a theory that proposes to get behind the symbolic function Ricoeur explores Freud's references to the energy of desire. Is it not possible to recognize that instinctual energy of an unspecified sort lurks in back of all the derivative significations which give the energy its form? Not so, Ricoeur concludes, because the use of the term energy is itself a metaphor of hydraulics, a symbolic way of expressing the fundamental source of human action. "In order to speak this muteness [of raw energy at the instinctual level] psychoanalysis has only the energy metaphor of charge and discharge, and the capitalist metaphor of placement and investment (cathexis)."[2] More than that, to say that pure instinctual energy is the basic reality of human experience is to make the hydraulic metaphor the basic point of reference for understanding human life. To place it at the fundamental level of understanding makes it "no longer simply a model, nor even a point of view: it is a total view of things and of man in the world of things."[3]

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[1] Ibid., p. 174.

[2] Ibid., pp. 453-54.

[3] Ibid., p. 440.

To build a view of man on the basis of instinctual energy is not to expose the illusory quality of all symbols but to establish energy as the primary symbol.

Yet, within the Freudian archeological project it is not possible to establish even instinctual energy as a "primary" symbol. This symbol is itself a projection made from observation and interpretation of the various ways in which that energy manifested itself. The energy is never seen directly.[1] Any reference to energy is derived and not primary.

> The concepts of fusion and defusion have been constructed in order to state in energy language what happens when an instinct places its energy at the service of forces working in different systems. Consequently they are not based upon anything verifiable at the energy level itself where they are assumed to operate: fusion and defusion are simply the correlates, in energy language, of phenomena discovered by the work of interpretation when it focuses on the area of the instinctual representatives.[2]

By following Freud to the ultimate limits of his exploration Ricoeur finds that the most elemental of all symbolic references are pointing beyond themselves and interacting with one another to illumine human experience. These symbols, too, are multivalent in their character.

4. The movement of teleology

The Freudian task is an archeological one. His interpretation points backward to origins, to the "ever prior."[3] Yet, on the way Freud opens symbols forward as well as backward. Having gone all the way with Freud in the direction of source and origin, it is possible to begin looking the other direction within his work without distracting from Freud's primary contribution. This will be done first by briefly explicating a few Freudian terms which indicate that teleological interpretation is not entirely foreign to the Freudian framework, next by giving a couple of concrete examples of how symbols opened forward in some of Freud's own interpretations, and finally by referring to the results of Freud's clinical work.

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[1] Above, p. 86.

[2] Ibid., p. 297.

[3] Ibid., p. 440.

a. Terminology. Overdetermination is probably the Freudian term which most closely corresponds to multivalence. The overdeterminate quality of symbols is their capacity to resonate in various directions and at different levels. It offers an excess of meaning.[1] An earlier quotation from Norman O. Brown associated overdetermination with being "poly-symbolic" and "polymorphous."[2] David Rapaport indicates that overdetermined behavior in the Freudian framework is activity which can be related to several different structures and which requires multiple levels of analysis and interpretation.[3] This quality of the symbol from Freud's own vocabulary offers a basis for understanding how symbols can carry within themselves the possibility of both pointing back to an instinctual source and also pointing forward to possibility and requiring any full interpretation to pursue both directions.[4]

Sublimation represents not so much the multiplicity of directions to which a symbol points at the same time as the possibility that a symbol may change the direction in which it points. Sublimation has to do with the aim of an instinct. In sublimation it is not just the object of an instinctual aim which is substituted for the original object but it is the aim itself which is changed.

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[1] Ibid., p. 38.

[2] Brown, Love's Body, p. 248.

[3] David Rapaport, "The Structure of Psychoanalytic Theory," in Psychology, Vol. 3, pp. 82-104, cited by Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 348.

[4] Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 341.

> Sublimation consists in the instinct's directing itself towards an aim other than, and remote from, that of sexual satisfaction; in this process the accent falls upon deflection from sexuality.[1]

> Powerful components are acquired for every kind of cultural achievement by this diversion of sexual instinctual forces from sexual aims and their direction to new ones -- a process which deserves the name of 'sublimation.'[2]

This change in aim is variously called a "diversion"[3] or "redirection"[4] or, perhaps best of all, "transformation."[5] It stands in contrast to alternate ways of dealing with the instinctual forces -- inhibition,[6] obsession,[7] and repression.[8] The contrast highlights the difference in direction. Inhibition, obsession, and repression continually refer backward. Sublimation as a change of the aim points forward, and the possibility of transformation of the aim of instinctual forces indicates that there is a variety of ways in which those forces may be directed. Hence, according to the dynamics of sublimation, symbols may open forward in a variety of directions.

Herbert Marcuse's reference to desublimation draws on this understanding of sublimation. He mourns the loss of multivalent possibilities for instinctual forces and their confinement to a single valence or aim.[1]

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[1] Sigmund Freud, "On Narcissism: An Introduction," Standard Edition, XIV, 14 and 94, cited by Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, pp. 128-129.

[2] Sigmund Freud, Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality, Standard Edition, VII, 178, cited in Ricoeur's Freud and Philosophy, p. 194.

[3] Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 514.

[4] Ibid., p. 175.

[5] Ibid., pp. 214, 511, and 521.

[6] Ibid., p. 175.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., pp. 214 and 129.

Still, the sublimation is never separated from its instinctual source. Its valence, therefore, always goes in two directions -- toward the disguising of its derivation of energy and toward the disclosure of innovative meaning. Ricoeur writes that "insofar as revealing and disguising coincide in it, we might say that sublimation is the symbolic function itself."[2] The disguise is of its instinctual source.[3] The disclosure may open in any of a number of ways. Sublimation is multivalent in two dimensions.

Such concepts as condensation[4] and identification[5] from the Freudian vocabulary also demonstrate the teleological movement of symbolic valence.

b. Art interpretation. Freud gives an interpretation of the Mona Lisa in Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood.[6] He goes into considerable detail, it is true, to describe the association of Gioconda's smile as captured in the painting with the lost smile of his own mother and all the problems of childhood which went with that. It could be taken as a reductionist interpretation of the painting, accounting for it as the repetition of a childhood fantasy. Yet, a careful reading of Freud's

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[1] Herbert Marcuse, One-Dimensional Man (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), pp. 56, 67, and 73.

[2] Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 497.

[3] Ibid., pp. 514 and 523.

[4] Ibid., pp. 93, 102 and 98; also Brown, Love's Body, p. 239.

[5] Ibid., pp. 216-217, 224, and 477-83.

[6] Ibid., pp. 170-75; Sigmund Freud, Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood (1910), Standard Edition, XI, 63-137.

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analysis will not allow such a simplistic understanding. The memory of the mother's smile is given nowhere but in the smile in the painting, signified there by color and pattern. It is not the mother's smile which is better known and therefore merely reflected in the painting. It is the hue and texture of the painting which is better known and which resonates in the life of the artist so as to recreate in a secondary way his memory of a lost smile. The smile exists only in so far as it is presented in the painting.[1] A key sentence from Freud states: "It is possible that in these figures Leonardo denied the unhappiness of his erotic life and triumphed over it in his art, by representing the wishes of the boy, infatuated with his mother, as fulfilled in this blissful union of the male and female natures."[2] The childhood wishes were not simply repeated, it is to be noted, but "triumphed over" in the painting. So it fulfills the requirements of a work of art, which is beyond that of a dream.

> The dream looks backward toward infancy, the past; the work of art goes ahead of the artist; it is a prospective symbol of his personal synthesis and of a man's future, rather than a regressive symbol of his unresolved conflicts.[3]

So Freud was able to see in the works of art what he could not envision in religious symbols -- a multivalent quality which pointed not only backward to archaic origins but also forward in a teleological direction toward personal integration,[4] an enlargement of man's vision of possibilities, and an advancement of the consciousness toward a new understanding of itself.[5]

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[1] _Ibid._, p. 539.

[2] Sigmund Freud, _Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood_, _Standard Edition_, XI, 117-18, cited in Ricoeur's _Freud and Philosophy_, p.173.

[3] Ricoeur, _Freud and Philosophy_, p. 175.

[4] _Ibid._, p. 519.

[5] _Ibid._, p. 521.

Similar implications are to be found in Freud's treatment of "The Moses of Michelangelo."[1] Freud recognizes in the statue guarding the papal tomb more than the inner conflict of Moses between letting the tablets go in his anger and pulling his hand back to catch them. The image resonates on many levels of understanding. It opens insight to Michelangelo as well, to the dead Pope, and to Freud himself. The interpretation stands as evidence that the resources of psychoanalysis do not reduce the significance of art to a single point of reference but open the possibility of levels of understanding not yet explored. The symbolic associations in this work of art are multivalent.

One further work of art, Sophocles' Oedipus Rex, received more attention from Freud than any other. The classical interpretation of the myth was that its tragedy lay in the conflict between destiny established by the omnipotence of the gods and the vain efforts of men to escape evil. Freud saw the tragedy recognized by modern men as the recognition that the horror of incest and parricide are actually the primeval wishes of our own childhood now raised to haunt us through the classic drama.[2]

Ricoeur sees the play as a tragedy of truth. Oedipus calls down curses on the guilty party but is unwilling to accept the possibility of his own responsibility. The tragedy unfolds with the emergence of his own self-consciousness of what has happened. "The core of the veritable tragedy . . . is not the problem of sex, but the problem of light."[3]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 168-80; Sigmund Freud, "The Moses of Michelangelo" (1914), Standard Edition, XIII, 211-236.

[2] Sigmund Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams, Standard Edition, IV, 262 and 263.

[3] Ibid., p. 517.

Still another interpretation is that of Erich Fromm, who sees the drama as a demonstration of the tension between the patriarchal and the matriarchal qualities of life with the feminine powers proving themselves to be the most enduring and resilient in the end.[1]

Four different interpretations of one work of art, each probing the depths of the human spirit and his possibilities for the future, indicate the rich multivalent quality of a good piece of art. It is not only the particular insightful interpretation that Freud or Ricoeur could give to the drama that indicates the density of its texture and its possibilities for disclosure. It is rather the existence of such a diversity of carefully developed interpretations that bears witness to the multivalence present in Sophocles' artistry.

c. Clinical work. Ricoeur finds confirmation of his thesis that psychoanalysis is not a demystification of all symbolic structures also in Freud's clinical work.[2] What constitutes a successful completion of analysis is that one particular symbolic configuration emerges as satisfying to the patient. He comes away aware of some recognizable symbolic structure within which his existence can be understood and from which it can be lived. The patient has probed past the threshold of immediate consciousness into the unknown regions beyond until he is able to return to his consciousness with a more perceptive understanding of the signification he finds there.

5. The recapture of consciousness

At the end of this investigation we are led back to consciousness which was abandoned earlier in the process. The task of psychoanalysis, after all, is not finally to dispense with man's consciousness but "the act of becoming conscious."[1] The relinquishing of consciousness is but the prelude and the counterpart of the recovery of consciousness.[2]

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[1] Fromm, The Forgotten Language, pp. 196-231.

[2] Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 433.

The return to consciousness, like the return of Sir Launfal, is that of the sobered, chastened, waking man, whose consciousness emerges as though for the first time.

With the new awakening comes the awareness that man has no access to his immediate consciousness but rather to the symbols which have taken a material form.[3] They stand as cultural objects which represent or reduplicate the consciousness, manifesting it and making it available to man.[4]

Having made the journey past the threshold of consciousness, however, it would be disastrous to return too quickly or uncritically.[5] To do so would be to fall back into an idolatry, a fixation of symbols as objects, "a reification of the horizon."[6]

It was the shattering of the illusions of such idolatry with which the dispossession of consciousness began. ("How can you return again to such slavery?")[7] It is the recognition of the multivalence of the symbols which inform our consciousness which makes it possible to return to them in a fresh and more self-conscious way.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 439.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 424 and 429.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 495.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 523, 544, and 551.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 495.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 530.

[7] Gal. 4:9.

Symbols are the "concrete, mixed texture" in which both archeology and teleology are to be found.[1] They point both backward and forward. They disguise and reveal. They point backward toward origins, toward the realm of desire. They conceal and distort that realm, and the process of demystification is a continuous task never completed. Yet, they also reveal that realm, offering the only access we have to it, and even constituting its illusive contours. The overtones of the symbol continue to resonate back over the landscape of instinctual energy, past the contours we have been able to chart, beyond both our present understanding and any we might project. They call into question any attempt to absolutize our present understanding and lure us toward a further understanding of those overtones we have not yet even heard.

Similarly, those symbols exercise the prospective function of a teleology. They point to spirit as well as to desire, to the sacred as well as to the instinctual. In this direction, too, they offer the only access there is to the distant regions of the spirit. Whatever man has charted of those far reaches has been based on the wave lengths emitted from his symbols. It would be naive to suppose that the charts which have been developed so far are a definitive portrayal of the realm of the sacred. Also in this direction, perhaps especially here, the overtones of our symbols continue to resonate in rich and promising ways which we have just begun to understand. They move far off into the horizon where it is no longer possible to discern whether their movement is out from the symbol or back from some Other. In either case their transcendent quality sustains hope in the possibility of what might yet be.

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[1] Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 494.

When the full scope of the multivalence of symbols is surveyed like this, archeology and teleology emerge not so much as two opposite and competing modes of symbolic functioning but as two aspects of a characteristic symbolic quality -- multivalence. "Regression and progression do not represent two truly opposed processes; they are rather the abstract terms employed to designate the two end limits of a single scale of symbolization."[1] "Symbols represent [the two functions of disguising and revealing] in a concrete unity that reflection in its antithetic stage is forced to split into opposed interpretations."[2] When symbols are understood in this full range of their multivalence, the work of Freud opens the rich possibilities of the symbol not only in the direction of origins but also in that same process in its amplitude toward the other end of the scale, toward personal synthesis and man's future.

Against such a background the return to consciousness and to the symbols or cultural objects which reduplicate it comes together with the recognition of this incredibly great magnitude of signification. The work of art and literature gains its strength and richness not only from prospective dimensions which advance man's consciousness but also because at the same time they are resonating deep in the wells of the past.

> Are there any great symbols created by art or literature that are not rooted in the archaism of the conflicts and dramas of our individual or collective childhood? . . . But in works of art the emphasis is on disclosure; thus works of art tend to be prospective symbols of one's personal synthesis and of man's future.[3]

The same is true of religious symbols, though Freud himself does not expect so much from them and so does not explicate the full range of their signification. Freud's pursuit of their multivalence in the direction of archeology, when seen in this context, is no mere reductionism nor a way of explaining away the significance of the symbol. Instead, his demonstration that the valency of religious symbols reaches to levels deep in the heart of desire indicates that symbols with such a high amplitude of resonance will also extend far out toward the horizon of human possibility.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 522.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 497.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 521-22.

> The force of a religious symbol lies in the fact that it recaptures a primal scene fantasy and transforms it into an instrument of discovery and exploration of origins. . . . It is in and through certain primal scene fantasies that man 'forms,' 'interprets,' 'intends' meanings of another order, meanings capable of becoming the signs of the sacred which the philosophy of reflection can only acknowledge and salute at the horizon of its archeology and its teleology.[1]
>
> Each symbol of the sacred is also and at the same time a revival of an infantile and archaic symbol. The two functions of symbol remain inseparable.[2]

The image of the gong is evoked once more. When the gong is struck and the overtones are discovered to be strong and resonant in one direction, they will be expected to demonstrate similar strength in the other direction as well. Symbols which reverberate with great power in the direction of the sacred would be expected to exhibit vitality at the level of instinctual energy.

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[1] _Ibid_., p. 540.

[2] _Ibid_., p. 543.

PART II

ERIKSON'S CONFIGURATIONS AS SYMBOLS

CHAPTER IV

CONFIGURATIONS IDENTIFIED

Introduction

It is fundamental to the purpose of this dissertation to establish the way in which symbols are connected to the major body of Erikson's work. The procedure which immediately suggests itself is to build on Erikson's own explicit use of the term. However, there are only a few significant passages in which it is used in Erikson's work. While it will be important to incorporate an analysis of these passages in the present considerations,[1] they do not provide a basis which is sufficiently broad for interpreting the rich dynamics of Erikson's work in terms of symbolic formation.

A second approach is suggested by Erikson's frequent references to rituals, ideologies, myths, sacred writings, and visual images. While Erikson himself does not identify them as symbols, they are clearly within the definition of the term which is being used in this dissertation.[2] These cultural objects could be gathered into a distinctive category and identified as symbols. Then the dynamics which Erikson attributes to these symbols could be analyzed.

As with the first approach, it is important that this, too, be given careful consideration during the course of this study.[3] As will be seen, the dynamics which emerge from this approach describe how such symbols contribute to human development. As it turns out, these dynamics are an important dimension not only of human development but also of the way in which symbols themselves come to be formed. However, it is only one dimension of that process, and it is the full range of the dynamics of symbolic formation which is the primary concern of this dissertation. Therefore, this approach still does not offer the integral relationship between Erikson's work and symbolic formation.

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[1] Below, pp. 139 and 153.

[2] Above, p. 6.

[3] Below, pp. 168-171.

A third approach, and the one to be used as the basis for this Section of the dissertation, is to establish a significant congruity between symbols-as-cultural-objects and a central feature of Erikson's methodology -- configurations. If the relationship between symbols and such a central element in Erikson's work can be successfully established, then the full spectrum of the rich dynamics which Erikson develops will be available for developing an understanding of the dynamics through which symbols take shape.

A. Play Constructions as Configurations

"Configuration" was first used by Erikson to describe play constructions, and they remain a helpful paradigm for understanding his use of the term.

Erikson's use of play constructions began in his clinical work in the psychoanalysis of children. He demonstrated already in that setting that it was not only the selection of certain toys or the gestures made by the child toward them but also the actual spatial configuration in which the toys were arranged which was significant.[1]

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[1] Erik H. Erikson, "Configurations in Play -- Clinical Notes," Psychoanalytic Quarterly, VI (April, 1937), p. 140.

A second application of play constructions was made in comparative studies of groups of people. Erikson's most significant work in this area was done in a study conducted in Berkeley of about 160 children.[1] Most of those children built play constructions for Erikson at a time close to their eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth birthdays. There was a total of 468 constructions from which data was gathered. In his analysis of these constructions Erikson gave particular attention to their spatial arrangement. He regarded them as "the manifestation of an experience in actual space, in the dynamic relationship of shapes, sizes, distances--in what we may call spatial configurations."[2] As spatial configurations they were analyzed both for the shape of the overall construction and also for where the construction was placed on the table surface.[3] He concluded that the boys had built "intrusive" configurations such as towers while the girls had built "enclosure" configurations such as room arrangements.[4]

B. Characteristics

Even this brief sketch of the careful and extensive study points to three characteristics of the play constructions which are obvious here and which persist in Erikson's use of "configurations" throughout his career.

1. Visual

Constructions of blocks and toys are, unmistakably, a visual means of expression.

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[1] Erik H. Erikson, "Sex Differences in the Play Configurations of Preadolescents," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, XXI (October, 1951), p. 668.

[2] Erikson, "Configurations in Play," pp. 139-40.

[3] Erikson, "Sex Differences in the Play Configurations of Preadolescents," p. 668.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 688-692.

Freud already had recognized the importance of visual images. He regarded "optical mnemic residues" as being closer to the unconscious processes. Nevertheless, they are subordinated to verbal expressions as Freud proceeds with his therapeutic tasks.[1] Jacques Lacan picks up this emphasis on the word in his creative development of Freud.[2] Erikson, however, emphasizes the visual rather than the verbal aspect of Freud's work. He chides Freud, for example, for not even looking at his patients during his sessions with them so that the visual contact will not interfere with the verbal communication.[3]

An appreciation of the visual aspect of experience was deeply rooted in Erikson's early experience. As a young man he had travelled throughout Europe as an itinerant artist, sketching and painting his way across the continent.[4] Apparently he did not repudiate this visual mode of perception and expression when he took up his work at the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society.[5]

He was a pupil of Anna Freud, whose special interest was in the psychoanalytic treatment of children. She had stressed the importance of gaining access to that time in the child's experience which came before he

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[1] Sigmund Freud, "The Ego and the Id" (1923), The Standard Edition, XIX, 21.

[2] Jacques Lacan, "The Function of Language in Psychoanalysis," p. 80.

[3] Erik H. Erikson, Godkin Lectures of 1972, given at Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, April 12 and 13, 1972, unpublished, I, 197. (Recorded at 3 3/4 ips. Numbers following the lecture number [I or II] indicate the location on the tape for that lecture); Erikson, "Autobiographic Notes on the Identity Crisis" in Daedalus, XCIX (Autumn, 1970), p. 756.

[4] Robert Coles, Erik H. Erikson: The Growth of His Work (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1970), p. 23.

[5] Erikson, Godkin Lectures, I, 197.

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was able to speak.[1] Erikson, still the visual artist, discovered the value of play configurations for breaking through to this "land beyond the mountains."[2] He observed that "children express their vital problems in the metaphorical language of play -- more consistently and less self-consciously than they are able or willing to do in words."[3] So the spatial and visual character of the play constructions were important to Erikson in the most basic element of his therapy.

His use of play constructions later in his studies of groups was a continuation of the work of the psychoanalyst as artist. This artistic sensibility was to persist in all his continuing work. In his last major study (of Gandhi) Erikson acknowledges that his methodology must begin with "strong esthetic impressions."[4]

2. Gestalt

It is also clear from these play constructions that Erikson's attention is not drawn so much toward individual elements in the construction as toward the "over-all configuration."[5] He is interested in discovering the dominant mode of "the whole space" rather than the appearance of discreet symbolic images here and there.[1] At one point he identifies the space of the play construction with Lewin's "field."[2] This consideration of the total shape of the configuration is consistent with Erikson's interest in how that configuration serves as an indication of the "approach to the world" which is taken by the person who built the construction.[3] Both in the data he gathers from the constructions and in the interpretation of that data Erikson is concerned with the Gestalt, the total pattern which emerges.

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[1] Anna Freud, Introduction to the Technic of Child Analysis, Nervous and Mental Disease Monograph Series, No. 48, 1928, p. 43.

[2] Erikson, "Configurations in Play," p. 139.

[3] Erik H. Erikson, Studies in the Interpretation of Play, Genetic Psychology Monographs (Provincetown, Massachusetts: Journal Press, 1940) XXII, 564 and 588.

[4] Erik H. Erikson, Gandhi's Truth (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1969), p. 12 (Identified in subsequent footnotes as GT.)

[5] Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1968), p. 100. (Identified in subsequent footnotes as IYC.)

3. Modality

The constructions displayed a particular style or mode. Erikson's observation that the constructions built by the boys had an intrusive style while those built by girls were more enclosed indicates that he was able both to discern distinctive qualities in the constructions and also to classify them in types.[4] In order to verify these observations he had other professional people judge the constructions according to the criteria he had developed, and they were able to identify these modes with high consistency.

C. Extensive Use

Once the fundamental qualities of a configuration have been identified in play construction it is not difficult to recognize that many of

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 278.

[2] Erik H. Erikson, "Dramatic Productions Test," in *Explorations in Personality* by Henry A. Murray and others (New York: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 563.

[3] Erikson, IYC, p. 100.

[4] Erikson, "Sex Differences in the Play Configurations of Preadolescents," pp. 687 and 688.

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the key figures used by Erikson can be similarly described as "configurations."

1. Dreams

One of the primary resources of psychoanalysis is dreams, and Erikson remains in that tradition. Besides using dreams in his clinical work, Erikson also found the dreams of Freud important for the development of his theory and drew on the dreams of other great men as well when it came to interpreting their life experience. His way of understanding and interpreting these dreams clearly points to their configurational character.

Dreams, Erikson insists, are basically visual.[1] He reminds those colleagues who work primarily with verbal images that patients have great difficulty in expressing their dream experiences verbally. They insist that words are not adequate. The dream experience is more visual than verbal as the patient experiences it.[2] In his Godkin lectures he draws on Lewin's term, "the dream screen," to emphasize this visual quality of the dream experience.[3] The patient attempts to put in words what he has "seen," and the therapist conjures in his own mind a visual image based on the words which the patient speaks. The sketches of his dreams which Kandinsky submitted to his psychoanalyst offer vivid evidence in support of the visual quality of dreams.

This emphasis on the "screen" quality of the dream emphasizes this visual quality as well as the Gestalt in which the dream is viewed. This latter, Gestalt, aspect of the dream as configuration is confirmed in the way in which he proceeds with his interpretation of dreams. In dealing with Freud's dream about Count Thum, for example, Erikson explicitly refers to the "major spatial configurations" to which attention must be given.[1]

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[1] Coles, Erik H. Erikson: The Growth of His Work, p. 23.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Erikson, Godkin Lectures, II, 165 and 205-211.

In every treatment of a dream Erikson is looking for the peculiar modality which the dream displays. The Count Thum dream just referred to bears the over-all theme of "the need to pass."[2] Another dream is characterized by "the inability to trust" motif.[3]

Dreams, then, are treated as configurations just as much as play constructions are.

2. World-Images

The "world-image," which gives coherence to the life of a society, is in many ways quite different from a dream. It is a public vision, not a private one. The dream occurs at a specific and identifiable time in a person's life. He may not understand its significance, but the images of the dream are the material which is there from the beginning and which is available to be worked with. A world-image, by contrast, can be discerned only after studying a wide range of the experiences of a society and then coming to a sense of what characterizes the style of its life.

Yet, for all these differences, the world-image and the dream alike serve as instances of Erikson's "configuration." This can be demonstrated most clearly in his comparative study of two Indian tribes, the Yurok and the Oglala Sioux, although Erikson also speaks of the world-image of psychoanalysis,[1] of Fabian socialism,[2] and others.[3]

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[1] Erikson, Insight and Responsibility (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1964), p. 196. (Identified in subsequent footnotes as IR.)

[2] Ibid., p. 191 and 196.

[3] Ibid., p. 71.

The world-image of the Yurok is centripetal. Theirs is a circumscribed universe, surrounded by mountains and centered in the Klamath River, which runs through its valley. Food and wealth is to be carefully conserved, and gratification is to be delayed. Salmon, the chief food source, run but once a year. They must be caught then, and dried and stored for use throughout the year.

The Sioux, by contrast, have no sense of possession. The sources of food, like the plains, continue indefinitely. They range widely, not being confined to a particular location. Their life is centrifugal.[4]

These two contrasting world-images have all the qualities of a "configuration." They are highly visual. This is especially true of Erikson's characterization of the "tube configuration" of the Yurok with their concern for keeping channels uncontaminated,[5] although the expansiveness of the plains in terms of mobility (centripetality) and abundance (generosity) is also a highly visual image.[6]

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 226.

[2] Ibid., p. 189.

[3] Erik H. Erikson, Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2nd edition, 1958), p. 22. (Identified in subsequent footnotes as YML.)

[4] Erik H. Erikson, Childhood and Society, 2nd Edition (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1963), pp. 144-165 (Identified in subsequent footnotes as CS); Erik H. Erikson, "Observations on Sioux Education," Journal of Psychology, VII (January, 1939), pp. 101-128; Erik H. Erikson, "Childhood and Tradition in Two American Indian Tribes," in Personality in Nature, Society, and Culture, ed. Clyde Kuckhohn and Henry A. Murray (New York: Knopf, 1949), pp. 177-184.

[5] Erikson, "Childhood and Tradition in Two American Indian Tribes," p. 185.

[6] Erikson, CS, p. 166.

The Gestalt quality is present in a world-image by definition. The world-image is the Gestalt, the context in which life is understood and received and responded to.

Varieties in modality are also immediately demonstrated by the contrast between the centripetal mode of the Yurok and the centrifugal mode of the Sioux.

3. Rituals

Although Erikson recognizes the significance of ritual already in his early studies of the Oglala Sioux (Sun Dance)[1] and the Yurok (sweat house and fishdam ceremonials),[2] he does not treat the role of ritual in a formal way until his address to the Royal Society of London in 1965.[3] What had been implicit in the earlier references to ritual now is stated explicitly: ritual plays a critical role in establishing and sustaining the world-image of the society.[4] Proceeding with this assumption he inquires about what ritual will be adequate to support the emerging world-image based on the new technology and the sense of the unity of the whole human species.[5]

In this treatment it becomes evident that rituals, like the world-image with which they are so intimately linked, have a configurational character. They are not only visual but move beyond the single-sensory

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[1] Erikson, CS, pp. 147-49.

[2] Erikson, "Childhood and Tradition in Two American Indian Tribes," pp. 186 and 192.

[3] Erik H. Erikson, "Ontogeny of Ritualization in Man," in _Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London, Series B, Biological Sciences_, December 29, 1966 (Volume 251, Number 772), p. 346. (Identified as ORM in subsequent footnotes.)

[4] _Ibid._, p. 346.

[5] _Ibid._, p. 348.

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experience to involve the whole person. Erikson interprets them in a Gestalt sense. This is especially evident in the way he deals with the sweat house, demonstrating how both the total structure of the architecture (tube with two openings instead of a "sac" with one opening for both directions of movement in and out) and also the movement of the whole ceremony (purification of the channels of life by moving through rather than back and forth) portray the fundamental concern that the Yurok have with open channels.[1] Finally, ceremonies, like world-images, may formulate a wide range of modalities from the non-violence of Gandhi's Satyagraha[2] to the ferocity of the Oglala Sun Dance.[3]

Erikson gives an interpretation of rituals which is broad enough to include the particular type of childhood training which any society offers to its young. In his address to the Royal Society he portrays with clarity and detail that all social relations, beginning with the earliest experiences of infancy have a ritualistic character. He uses the "greeting ceremonial" at the beginning of an infant's day to demonstrate how the interaction between mother and child is a highly ritualized daily event.[4]

This notion opens a whole new significance to ritual in Erikson's work. His heavy emphasis on the childhood patterns of whole societies, like the Sioux and the Yurok, and of great men, like Luther and Gandhi, can now be viewed as part of the ritualistic life of man. Erikson is careful to demonstrate in this lecture that the rituals of childhood and of adult institutions are closely related.[1] Since child training is ritualized, it can also be appropriately included as a configuration in Erikson's understanding.

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[1] "Childhood and Tradition in Two American Indian Tribes," p. 186.

[2] Erikson, ORM, p. 349.

[3] Erikson, CS, p. 148.

[4] Erikson, ORM, p. 338.

While rituals include such patterns as childhood training, they are not limited to that application. Rituals like the Sun Dance and the sweat house ceremony are the first points of reference when rituals are considered, and any ritualized action is described in terms of such configurations.

What is more, these fundamental rituals are also cultural objects. They are the first of the configurations from Erikson to be described here which meet this qualification of a "symbol" as it was established at the beginning of this paper.[2]

4. Ideologies

Another type of configuration frequently used by Erikson is the ideology. He is careful to distinguish his own use of the term from its frequent usage to describe a political and narrow (often totalitarian) way of thinking.[3] He uses it in a more positive and broader sense:

> An ideological system is a coherent body of shared images, ideas, and ideals which . . . provides for the participants a coherent, if systematically symplified, over-all orientation in space and time, in means and ends.[4]

Such an understanding of ideologies makes them much more like the total world-images of a culture than a narrow political doctrine. It is this

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[1] *Ibid.*, 338-347; compare also CS, pp. 247-269.

[2] Above, p. 6.

[3] Erikson, YML, p. 22.

[4] Erikson, IYC, pp. 189 and 190; compare also Karl Mannheim, *Utopia and Ideology* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1949), p. 56.

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similarity to world images which makes it easy to classify them as one of Erikson's configurations.

Like world images, ideologies serve to give coherence to a society and help it to make sense of what it does. They offer a sense of direction and identity to the people in that society. Ideologies serve different types of societies, so they are able to express different modalities, corresponding to the style or character of the societies to which they belong. Erikson speaks, for example, of his own "immigrant ideology"[1] and of the communal character of kibbutz ideology.[2]

However, there are also some differences between ideologies and world-images. Some of them are intimated already in the writing of Erikson. For example, Erikson is more likely to have verbal images in mind when he refers to ideologies. He is more likely to describe them in terms of "ideas and ideals"[3] while world-images are viewed in more visual terms.[4] Ideologies are more likely to be identified as a "system."[5]

In addition, Erikson refers to ideologies as offering a "simplified" perspective[6] but never speaks of world-images as simplifications.

Erikson opens the door for still another distinction between ideologies and world-images by indicating that "an ideological system is . . .

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 227.

[2] Ibid., p. 194.

[3] Erik H. Erikson, "Identity" in the International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, ed. David S. Sills (New York: The Macmillan Company and the Free Press, 1968), VIII, 63.

[4] Above, p. 109.

[5] Erikson, IYC, p. 188.

[6] Ibid., pp. 187 and 190.

based on . . . an implicit Weltanschauung, a highly structured world image . . ."[1] The world-image of a culture is more diffuse. It is present throughout the society but is not necessarily clearly and consciously delineated anywhere. It may remain implicit and hidden. In the ideology this all-pervading image is brought into a recognizable shape. It takes a form which is explicit and tangible. This concretization of the world-image in the form of an ideology is of vital importance for the culture because it is by means of the ideology that the identity of a society is passed on to the next generation.[2]

All of this may amount to no more than a quibbling over words -- except that the distinction serves as a preliminary insight into the relationship between Erikson's configurations and symbols-as-cultural-objects. Ideologies as they have been defined by Erikson are a clear example of the cognitive type of cultural objects described by Parsons.[3] They are consciously held by a community of persons and are transmissible. They exercise the symbolic functions, though perhaps somewhat less vividly than other configurations because they tend to be more verbal than visual. With these characteristics they can be clearly identified as symbols. World-images are more elusive, more likely to be just below the surface. It may often require the discerning analysis of a specialist to lift that image to consciousness. He will look to such cultural objects as ideologies and rituals in order to detect the implicit world-image upon which they are "based."[4]

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[1] Ibid., p. 189.

[2] Ibid., p. 134.

[3] Parsons and Shils, Toward a General Theory of Action, p. 163; above pp. 6 and 7.

[4] Erikson, IYC, p. 189.

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When he comes upon that world-image and holds it up for the members of the society to see, they will likely respond in much the same way as a patient whose dream has been interpreted in a meaningful and insightful way -- with a gleam of recognition as of something that had always been there but never clearly seen.

Erikson's configurations are often like the world-image -- implicit and hidden and brought into conscious understanding under the tutelage of an analyst. It is difficult to call something which is as diffuse as a world-image a cultural object. Yet, it is not far removed from being one and may even become one when it is raised to public recognition and becomes a mark of identity for a society.

5. Identity

If play constructions were the initial manifestation of a configuration in Erikson's work, then identity, which emerges as a culmination of his discoveries, offers the fullest expression of a configuration. Erikson explicitly states that identity is a configuration: "The process of identity formation emerges as an evolving configuration."[1]

Almost by definition a person's identity must be seen in Gestalt terms if it is to be understood adequately. To speak of a person's identity is to speak of what he is about in his totality. No one would accept some isolated or incidental segment of his experience as a satisfactory expression of his identity. It is true that Erikson draws on specific experiences to speak of the identity of a person, but these are selected because of the insight they give into what gives coherence and continuity to the total life of that person.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 163.

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Thus, when Erikson contrasts the styles in which people hold their identities (some with an organic sense of wholeness and others with the more arbitrary delineation of "totality"), he speaks of them specifically in terms of the "Gestalt" which each of the styles evokes.[1]

It is equally obvious that identities may portray a wide variety of modes. In the many studies of identity made by Erikson the modalities which emerge are so varied that it is not possible to classify them in pre-determined categories. He did not adopt the familiar patterns of Freud,[2] and he refused to impose a new set of his own. Each person is to be understood on his own terms.

The visual character of identity configurations, it must be admitted, would probably not be recognized if it had not been evident in all of the other types of configurations. The same observation was made about ideologies but for quite a different reason. Ideologies tend to have a more verbal or "idea" quality about them. They are less vivid and have less vitality than other configurations. The patterns of identity, on the other hand, are more complex than those of other configurations, so no one dimension of the senses is as likely to be adequate for their full expression. They must be even more dynamic and vivid than the others if they are actually to provide a sense of integration for a person's life.

Still, the visual quality of identity configurations is not to be denied. A striking example emerges in Erikson's study of Maxim Gorky, which was based to a great extent on a Russian film portraying the childhood of the great writer. In a critical scene a stranger says to Alyosha (Gorky),

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[1] _Ibid_., pp. 80 and 81.

[2] Coles, _Erik H. Erikson: The Growth of His Work_, pp. 58 and 59.

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"One must learn how to take life." However, the gesture which accompanied those words, that is, the visual imagery, did not fit that English caption, which implied that a person had to take life as it came. The contradiction moved Erikson to inquire afterwards about the original Russian phrase which the film used at that crucial point. He discovered that the Russian word "wzat" is appropriately translated as "take" but that it means "take" in the sense of "grasp."[1] The verbal communication had given him a sense of passive acceptance of life. It was the visual configuration which had suggested another direction. Indeed, Erikson came to interpret the identity of Gorky as that of a man who moved from a passive acceptance of the forces of life to a taking hold of life to shape it and mold it in a sense of freedom and power.[2] This is typical of Erikson's inclination to see identity configurations in their visual aspects.

His study of Gandhi stands out as another instance. Gandhi is portrayed as basically a "householder." This is demonstrated in the way he assumed his responsibility, the way he "householded" his personal strength, and the way he extended the boundaries of his household far beyond his nuclear family with his child-bride and their children to include all the dispossessed of India. However, the key imagery that lies behind all of these is the picture of that sprawling household in which Gandhi lived as a child and which included both close quarters for his immediate family and also a lot of additional space for the extended Gandhi clan.[3]

Even in the case of Martin Luther, a man whose identity is closely associated with the Word, Erikson closes the study with a visual image of the statue of Luther at Worms.[1]

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[1] Erikson, CS, p. 384.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 394.

[3] Erikson, GT, p. 104.

Identity, it is clear, belongs in the list of the configurations which play so prominent a part in Erikson's work -- probably even at the top of the list.

In summary, the "configuration" is a form which is distinct and identifiable in the work of Erikson. This has been demonstrated by establishing three characteristics of configurations -- (1) they are visual; (2) their significance is to be found in their Gestalt rather than in the discreet elements within them; and (3) they display a particular style or mode. It has been confirmed by portraying how these requirements for a configuration are met by a great number of key resources in Erikson's work -- play constructions, dreams, world-images, rituals, ideologies, and identities.

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[1] Erikson, YML, p. 267.

CHAPTER V

CONFIGURATIONS AS SYMBOLS

All three of the symbolic functions outlined in Part I are exercised by these configurations in the work of Erikson.

A. The Configuration is Form-Giving

1. Configurations provide clues

Whenever Erikson seems to describe the distinctive style or consciousness of a person or group, he relies on configurations to provide both the clues and the evidence for his exposition. How does he know that the Yurok are characterized as centripetal people more likely to hold on to possessions than to release them? He has discovered that through such configurations in their culture as the sweat house and the fish dam (both ritualistic) and their patterns of child-rearing.

How did he discover the key to Gandhi's "truth"? By "the whole configuration of actualities"[1] which included his care of his dying father, the Hindu sense of *ahimsa*, and the plight of the textile mill workers at Ahmedabad. How did he come upon the approaches to reality which distinguished the boys from the girls in the Berkeley study? By viewing the over-all patterns which emerged in their play constructions (configurations).

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[1] Erikson, GT, p. 413.

Every study made by Erikson confirms this basic procedure. Whether he is trying to understand Luther or Gandhi, the Oglala Sioux or the Yurok, womanhood or adolescence, these configurations, visual in character and interpreted according to the Gestalt which they manifest, provide the key to the distinctive modalities of life which he describes in each.

The frequent appearance of configurations in the work of Erikson, obviously, is no accident. They serve as the epistemological keys which have opened the doors to the distinctive knowledge and perspectives found in his studies. They are the source of his "insights," a recurrent theme in his later work.[1]

Just how aware Erikson himself is of this procedure is not immediately clear. On the one hand, he states explicitly from time to time that his method is one of "configurational analysis."[2] In these instances, which include the Berkeley study of school children and the interpretation of Freud's dream of Count Thun, there can be no doubt but that Erikson recognizes that the configurations are his entree into the mysteries of knowledge.

On the other hand, Erikson does not regularly apply this label to his methodology. He is more likely to speak of "psycho-historical research."[3] Even this terminology, however, serves only to clarify that he seeks to work with configurations which function both psychologically and also historically and does not suggest an alternative to configurational analysis.

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[1] Erik H. Erikson, Insight and Freedom, The T. B. Davie Memorial Lecture (Capetown, South Africa: University of Capetown, 1968), pp. 3 and 4; Erikson, Insight and Responsibility, p. 10, and Gandhi's Truth, pp. 436-441.

[2] Erikson, "Sex Differences in the Play Configurations of Preadolescents," pp. 676 and 679, and IR, p. 193.

[3] Erikson, GT, p. 55; and IR, pp. 206-208.

Consequently, it seems fair to say that not only did Erikson use configurations as his epistemological method but that he himself has been aware of that procedure. However, he has not been sufficiently interested in the possibilities contained in the method itself to develop its implications. This paper offers an occasion for such a development.

Erikson himself opens some intriguing relationships between his configurational analysis and the symbolic function in one further specific reference to this method. It is the only one in his work which is at all explicit about what he means to imply by that term.

> A level of analysis lies between description and interpretation, namely the level of configurational analysis, which would allow the establishment of differences between the diverse variations of the primal-father theme and, maybe, their specific dynamic place within their cultures of origin.[1]

This passage occurs as Erikson is giving an interpretation of the creation myth of the Yurok. He is rejecting two alternatives to configurational analysis in dealing with this myth.

On the one hand, he is refusing to settle for a purely descriptive analysis that would be the approach of empiricism. Cassirer, similarly, sees the inadequacy of such interpretation for dealing with the form-giving function.[2]

On the other hand, Erikson is also unwilling to limit the interpretation of myths by insisting that they are all a repetition of the primal-father theme. On this point we can be sure of his implication. In many of his studies he makes it a point to reject "originology," the Freudian emphasis that the significance of every experience is determined by its origin, specifically, in early childhood.[1] No such fixed referent outside of the configuration is to be given priority to the configuration itself.

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[1] Erik H. Erikson, Observations on the Yurok: Childhood and World Image, Monograph, University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology, Volume XXXV, Number 10 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1943), p. 275.

[2] Above, pp. 22 and 23.

This is precisely the objection that Cassirer had to Freudian analysis. He insisted that there is nothing prior to the symbolic function -- no primal-father; in fact, no thing-in-itself.[2] In his insistence on configurational analysis Erikson is affirming that each configuration is to be understood on its own terms. He is giving priority to the configuration just as Cassirer gave priority to the symbolic form[3] and as Ricoeur insisted on the primary quality of symbols.[4]

2. Configurations exercise the form-giving function

Against the background of Part I it becomes clear that these configurations as they are used by Erikson exercise the form-giving function which Cassirer ascribes to symbols. When Cassirer, for example, says that the cultural objects are symbolic in that they manifest the form-giving function which has shaped the consciousness,[5] that function is identical with Erikson's description of the function of a configuration: "In the playful arrangement which the child is driven to superimpose on the inventory

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[1] Erikson, YML, p. 18; GT, p. 98; IR, p. 114; "The Human Life Cycle," The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, ed. David S. Sills (New York: The Macmillan Company and the Free Press, 1968), VIII, 63.

[2] Above, p. 21; also Cassirer, The Myth of the State, pp. 32-36.

[3] Above, pp. 20-22.

[4] Above, pp. 52 and 53.

[5] See the discussion of "cultural objects" on pp. 15-18 above.

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of toys we offer him, he offers us an outline of the 'inner image' in which he is caught."[1] The "arrangement" (configuration or cultural object) reveals the inner image. It is functioning symbolically. Erikson, of course, would not hold that the playful arrangement was the beginning of the form-giving activity. It is the concrete manifestation of a form-giving activity which has been actively constituting the child's sense of reality all along.

Cassirer understands that it is the symbolic function which constructs reality for the whole person and for a society.[2] Erikson's method is built on the assumption that the configuration gives form in just that way. The "reality" of the Sioux nation is constituted by the configuration of generosity and abundance and ferocity-at-denial manifested in the Sun Dance and in the ritual of child-care.[3] The form-giving function which permeates the entire experience of the Sioux nation comes into focus in these specific shapes. That must be the case for Erikson, or he could not possibly give these configurations the weight that he does in his interpretation of the Sioux experience.

Even in the passage in which Erikson is deciding whether to call play constructions "metaphoric" or "symbolic"[4] he is assuming that in either case those constructions are serving a form-giving and multivalent function.

B. The Configuration Gives Personal Orientation

In the work of Erikson it is in identity that configurations reach their fullest development.[1] Therefore, though configurations certainly exercise the form-giving function, as Cassirer described it, they do not culminate, as do Cassirer's symbolic forms, in the expression of pure relation with high precision. Instead, the form-giving configurations in Erikson's work move toward personal orientation in the world, the central function of symbols according to the work of Eliade.[2] When it was demonstrated that identity is a configuration in Erikson's work,[3] the capacity of configurations to give personal orientation was already established. Only a few implications remain to be spelled out here.

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[1] Erikson, Studies in the Interpretation of Play, p. 575.

[2] Above, p. 20.

[3] Erikson, CS, pp. 136, 137, 148, and 149.

[4] Erikson, Studies in the Interpretation of Play, pp. 664 and 665; below, p. 153.

1. The configuration offers integration

When a person or a society suffers from a lack of orientation in the world, he is in desperate straits. The experience of the Achilpa, of the Fisher King, and of the prisoners in the death camps made this poignantly clear.[4] Erikson describes similar instances when he speaks of "identity confusion."[5] He quotes Biff, one of the sons in "Death of a Salesman" by Arthur Miller as an example: "I just can't take hold, Mom. I can't take hold of some kind of life."[6] William James provides another:

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[1] Above, p. 115.

[2] Above, Chapter II.

[3] Above, pp. 115-117.

[4] Above pp. 48 and 49.

[5] Erikson first used "diffusion" but later substituted "confusion." He actually preferred the sense of the former because it represented the "loss of a center." However, a second meaning of the term associates it with distribution in spatial terms and he dropped it to avoid misunderstanding. Still, when understood according to his original intention, "diffusion" comes closer to the sense of "falling apart within" which he intends to convey. IYC, p. 212.

[6] *Ibid*., p. 131.

> Decidedly I was losing hold of my 'self,' and making acquaintance with a quality of mental distress that I had never known before, its nearest analogue being the sinking, giddying anxiety that one may have when, in the woods, one discovers that one is really 'lost.' . . . In this experience [a dream] all was diffusion from a centre, and a foothold swept away, the grace itself disintegrating all the faster as one needed its help more direly. . . . Unless I can attach them [various dream images he had had], I am swept out to sea with no horizon and no bond, getting lost.[1]

Both of these examples offer the same sense of loss of orientation to which Eliade referred.

Erikson speaks of the necessity of overcoming this confusion as "an inescapable inner need"[2] so marked that it "may look like an especially powerful manifestation of naked instinctual expression."[3] He goes so far as to say that this quest for orientation or identity is the most serious contemporary emotional problem just as the inhibitions surrounding sexuality were the most urgent in Freud's day.[4]

There is no question, then, but that Erikson concurs with Eliade on the fundamental importance of having a sense of orientation in his life in the world. It is the development of identity which provides the "over-all orientation in space and time."[5]

The formation of a person's identity is the process of integrating or synthesizing the rich variety of experience he has had, his social environment, and his libidinal needs.[6] Erikson's study of Luther demonstrates

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[1] Ibid., p. 206.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 190.

[3] Ibid., p. 54.

[4] Erikson, CS, p. 81.

[5] Erikson, IYC, p. 190.

[6] Ibid., p. 163.

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such a process. Luther's early life had been filled with ambivalent feelings toward his father. His father had moved from his status as a peasant to a bourgeoisie position in the mines, but was still not confident of his newly earned place.[1] The father would punish Martin severely and then go to great pains to win back his affection afterward.[2] Hans (Martin's father) transferred his own ambition onto expectations of his eldest son,[3] and this made it impossible for him to give his blessing to Martin's entrance into the cloister.[3] The result was Martin's fundamental anxiety about not being justified in the eyes of his father.[4] The struggle manifested itself in the "fit" he had in the choir with his sudden and uncontrolled exclamation, "It isn't me!"[5] and also in the profound melancholy he experienced as a monk.[6] The way of propitiation proved to be an inadequate way of coping with this tension. No amount of mortification would suffice.[7] Only the breakthrough which came during his study of the book of Psalms proved to be an adequate synthesis of the diverse elements of his life.[8] "The sense of total justification which both the father and the Father had denied him"[9] was now his gift. This unique pattern of integration emerged from a long process of identity formation which extended much later into his life than it does for most people. The delayed and painful development of his identity is more easily traced than that of the average person, but it is in some sense the process of every man as he moves toward his unique orientation in the world.

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[1] Erikson, YML, p. 53.

[2] Ibid., p. 64.

[3] Ibid., p. 66.

[4] Ibid., p. 95.

[5] Ibid., pp. 23 and 38.

[6] Ibid., p. 197.

[7] Ibid., p. 156.

[8] Ibid., p. 202.

[9] Ibid., p. 149.

The same movement toward integration of life forces can be seen in all of Erikson's studies of identity. In the case of the two American Indian tribes, for example, Erikson used quite different methods of research from those used in the study of Luther's story. Yet, regarding those studies, too, he concluded: "We have concentrated on the configurations with which these two tribes try to synthesize their concepts and their ideals in a coherent design for living."[1] The synthesizing power of those configurations relieve man from personal confusion and protect him from "individual anxiety."[2]

This is precisely the life-orienting function which Eliade attributed to symbols. In "cosmicizing" the world they put an end to "the tension and anxiety caused by the relativity and disorientation [or homogeneous space]."[3] Erikson's configurations are seen once again as constructs which exercise the symbolic function.

2. The configuration maintains personal continuity.

Erikson is reluctant to give any specific definition of identity. The integration associated with it in the last section is usually described as an ongoing process in which the configuration of identity is both shaped by the ego's synthesizing efforts and in turn contributes to the person's sense of being centered. The closest Erikson seems to come to giving a definition of identity itself is when he describes it as a sense of "sameness and continuity."[1]

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[1] Erikson, CS, p. 185.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Above, p. 50; compare Ricoeur on the integrating and unifying function of symbols on page 52 above.

Such continuity has three dimensions. One is "a subjective sense of an invigorating sameness and continuity," a kind of inner identity which gives coherence to the various forces which a person feels within himself.[2] This aspect of continuity is another way of expressing the integration capacity of identity which has just been treated.

A second dimension of this sense of "self-sameness" is the continuity that a person feels between his sense of himself and his role in the society in which he participates. This is "the accrued confidence that one's inner sameness enjoys a continuity with one's meaning for others."[3] Such continuity has social as well as individual aspects.

The third dimension is a temporal one. Identity has a continuity which extends through time. Erikson's expectations of this continuity were most dramatically demonstrated when he returned to Berkeley to interview people whom he had studied in his play configuration research more than twenty years earlier. He reported instances of amazing continuity between the configurations which had appeared in the play constructions of a child

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[1] Erikson, CS, p. 261; IYC, pp. 17, 67, and 234.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 19.

[3] Erikson, CS, p. 261; IYC, p. 234.

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and the orientation to life which the same person had much later as an adult.[1]

His autobiographic reflections portray how his own sense of identity demonstrates such continuity through time. His own parents, both Danish, separated before he was born. His mother married the pediatrician who was the infant Erikson's doctor when Erikson was only three. Dr. Homburger, his stepfather, was a German and a Jew, and Erikson had nothing but good to say of him. As he grew older Erikson discovered his step-son status, in spite of his mother's attempts not to "trouble" him with the facts of his own father's desertion. (Erikson remembered, for example, something from those first three years before he and his mother moved into the Homburger household in Baden.)

Out of these early experiences emerged a configuration which displays considerable consistency throughout his life. His early phantasies were of how he, now the son of much better parents, had been "altogether a foundling."[2] The image of the step-son, continually in situations in which he did not quite "belong," persisted through his childhood. In his stepfather's temple he was a goy, and out on the street with his playmates he was a "Jew." Living in Germany during World War I, he was often regarded as a "Dane," associated with the country that remained neutral and refused to come to the aid of Germany. The configuration remained in evidence in his later life. He was the only member of the psychoanalytic group who did not have medical training. Psychoanalysis itself was a stepchild profession.

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[1] Erikson, The Godkin Lectures, I, 165.

[2] Erikson, "Autobiographic Notes on the Identity Crisis," p. 743.

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The rise of the Nazi regime forced him to leave his homeland to adopt (or be adopted by) another country. A person cannot help but feel in reading his work that even though it is carefully edited by his Canadian-born wife it still bears the marks of a man who is not entirely at home in his adopted language. It would be interesting to know the story behind the way the name "Homburger" is used with less and less frequency until it remains only as an "H." in "Erik H. Erikson." In his new country he accepted positions at great universities (Harvard, Yale, and California-Berkeley) even though he did not have the credentials of a Ph.D., and he practised psychiatric therapy both in private practice (at a Marlborough Street office in Boston) and in the Austen Riggs center for psychoanalytic training and research without benefit of a medical degree. Through it all is the continuing configuration of "a kind of favored stepson identity that made [Erikson] take for granted that I should be accepted where I did not quite belong."[1]

Similar continuity is evident in the life of Gandhi as Erikson unfolded the configuration of the "householder" throughout his life.[2] This continuity in identity displayed in his own life, in the Berkeley child grown to adulthood, in Gandhi, and in other identity studies by Erikson provides consistent evidence of the sustained orientation which an identity configuration brings to a person's life. The metaphor of "the center of the earth" used so frequently by Eliade to describe the function of a symbol offers the same sense of continuity through the vicissitudes of life.[3] Erikson also makes occasional references to the image of the "center" to speak of the function of an identity configuration,[1] and in the case of the Yurok Indians describes their identity configuration as one related to the "center," centripetal.[2]

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[1] Ibid., p. 744.

[2] Above, p. 117.

[3] Above, p. 51.

3. *The configuration shapes ethical decisions*

The continuity just described extends both toward the past, maintaining continuity with earlier configurations, and also toward the future, being sustained in subsequent ones.[3] Within this continuity there is a reciprocal relation between action and identity. On the one hand, a person's active participation in the world contributes to his identity. This is supported both by Cassirer[4] and by Erikson's treatment of the integrating process.[5] On the other hand, a person's sense of his own identity provides the context in which action is taken and in which decisions are made. If the former emphasizes the relation between identity and the past, the latter stresses the impact of identity on the future.

The nature of the relationship between identity and ethical decisions needs careful attention. The word "context" was used advisedly in the last paragraph. Identity is not itself a moral code. A person's identity is a configuration which functions on a more primary level of human existence. It is fed by experience (action), but it also nourishes the roots from which ethical decisions spring.

Erikson clarifies this relationship: "An age-specific *ethical*

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[1] Erikson, *Insight and Responsibility*, p. 148.

[2] Erikson, *Observations on the Yurok*, p. 273.

[3] Erikson, IR, p. 107.

[4] Above, pp. 55 and 56.

[5] Above, pp. 124-127.

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capacity . . . is the true criterion of identity."[1] Ethical actions, thus, point to a person's identity and provide evidence of the type of configuration which constitutes that identity, but they are not the equivalent of it.

The relationship between identity and ethical decisions is interpreted best by some specific examples from Erikson's research. His observation about the division in the United States over the country's military involvement in Viet Nam is that the disagreement was not rooted in different sets of factual data or in a deficiency of moral commitment on either side but in an "identity conflict."[2] Each side of the debate interpreted those facts and exercised its moral commitment out of a different identity configuration, and this was the source of the painful national debate. Conflicting identities shaped conflicting ethical decisions.

The identity of Gandhi as a householder, which has already been briefly described,[3] shaped the ethical decisions of a man who faced great ambiguity in forging new patterns of moral conduct. It was the identity of one responsible for an extended household which provided the context for Gandhi's decisions to take upon himself as his personal responsibility the oppression of the Indian community in South Africa,[4] of the mill workers in Ahmedabad,[5] and of the whole Indian people under the British-imposed

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 39.

[2] _Ibid_., p. 319; Erikson's analysis here is remarkably parallel to the observation made in Chapter II earlier in this dissertation in connection with the work of Cassirer and Ricoeur: "It is by symbols and not by empirical observations or rational thought that man receives his orientation in the world," p. 53.

[3] Above, p. 117.

[4] Erikson, GT, pp. 169 and 170.

[5] _Ibid_., pp. 196 and 326.

Rowlatt Act denying civil liberties even to suspected insurrectionists.[1] The responsibility of the householder was further demonstrated in the careful way that he supervised the life of the various Ashrams (communal groups) which sprang up from his inspiration.[2] Most strikingly, however, the identity of the householder was evident in the ethical decisions he made to take responsibility for violations among his own followers of his principles of non-violent resistance. In South Africa he went personally to deal with members of his group who had broken the discipline.[3] At the time of the great hartal (national strike) Gandhi travelled across the full width of the subcontinent to Ahmedabad because of the report that some participants in the strike had engaged in violence, even in murder.[4] He took his responsibility for his extended household so seriously that he personally fasted in penitence for the evil deed committed by some of "his own" and then called off the hartal. Even though pragmatically the hartal was exercising great power across India, these incidents of violence (really very small in comparison to the millions of participants) indicated that his people (household) were not yet properly prepared to take the step of Satyagraha (non-violent resistance). Erikson interprets all these ethical actions with reference to Gandhi's sense of his own identity.

It seems clear, therefore, that the configurations which Erikson discerns shape a person's ethical decisions. This function of identity

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[1] Ibid., p. 383.

[2] Ibid., pp. 237-341, and Mohandas K. Gandhi, An Autobiography (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), p. 333.

[3] Gandhi, An Autobiography, p. 342.

[4] Ibid., p. 389.

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configurations coincides precisely with Eliade's description of the function of a symbol and with the conclusion drawn in Chapter II: "A man's symbolic orientation in the world provides the basis for his morality and the context for his decision-making."[1]

In summary, the function of Erikson's configurations, particularly those of identity, in providing a personal orientation for man in the world corresponds well with the orienting function of symbols as Eliade understands it.[2] It is possible now to speak of Erikson's configurations as constructs which exercise the symbolic function with considerable strength. This is particularly evident in the identity configurations for in them the symbolic function emerges as their most distinctive feature. It is becoming evident that they are "forms" of consciousness which more explicitly portray the form-giving activity which is present in all of human experience."[3]

Their symbolic functioning is confirmed when the multivalent quality of these configurations is investigated.

C. The Configuration is Multivalent

A dream by a patient of Erikson will serve as a concrete demonstration of the multivalent quality of a configuration. The dream report was as follows:

> There was a big face sitting in a buggy of the horse-and-buggy days. The face was completely empty, and there was a horribly, slimy, snaky hair all around it. I am not sure it wasn't my mother.[4]

Taken by itself and limited to its own frame of reference the imagery of the

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[1] Above, p. 51.

[2] Above, pp. 48-53.

[3] Above, p. 19.

[4] Erikson, IR, p. 57.

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dream is quite clearly delineated and not very complex.

However, Erikson finds a great deal of significance in this simple dream image of an empty face with ropy hair on a buggy. By means of the associations made by the patient in conversation just before and following the dream as well as the associations made by Erikson himself with other dream patterns and with his identity research this dream resonated on many levels.

> (1) It represented the stage of therapeutic development at the time of the dream. Erikson's shock of unruly white hair and his ruddy face fit the dream pretty well. For a number of reasons the patient was in fear of losing his relationship with the therapist.
>
> (2) The religious and vocation crisis which the patient had suffered not long before was also signified in the dream. He had been a seminary student and had struggled desperately to come into the presence of God in his prayer life; somehow God had eluded him in it all. Michelangelo's portrayal of the face of God bears some resemblance to the dream figure.
>
> (3) The relationship with his grandfather, who had been a rural clergyman, is also suggested by the dream image. He had been a figure of strength on whom the patient could count through life's vicissitudes. However, he had defied the grandfather, and not too long afterward the "tower of strength" collapsed, grandfather died. (Grandfather had bushy white hair and sometimes showed him the animals and implements on farms.)
>
> (4) The patient's mother is here, too. He remembers her "pretty, soft, and loving face," but he also has vivid impressions of her strong and painful emotions and especially the fears evoked by any aggressive act he may have performed. The soft face is surrounded by frenzy.
>
> (5) Finally, there is the association with the mythological head of Medusa, an angry face with snake-like hair and an open mouth. Freud interpreted the head of Medusa as a representation of the "feminine void," an expression of the masculine horror of femininity, a symbol of castration.[1]

What was in itself a comparatively simply image comes to have a rich set of connections.

Erikson finds a common theme running through all of these associations. It emerges as an "interpretation" of what the patient was experiencing in the dream:

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[1] *Ibid*., pp. 63-71.

> Whenever I begin to have faith in somebody's strength and love, some angry and sickly emotions pervade the relationship, and I end up mistrusting, empty, and a victim of anger and despair.[1]

It was an understanding that "felt right" to the patient as well as the therapist. The patient had described it as "the most disturbing dream of his life,"[2] but after an hour with the therapist during which this interpretation emerged, he left the office "with a broad smile and obvious encouragement."[3]

1. Multivalence makes configurations significant

This brief resume of an hour of therapy confirms the earlier observation that configurations, dream images in this instance, are the epistemological key to Erikson's discoveries.[4] The title of the article in which the dream and its interpretation is reported is "The Nature of Clinical Evidence." So Erikson is dealing specifically with the matter of how the therapist comes to know what he has to work with. Obviously, his point of departure in this inquiry is the configuration of the dream.

This extended case study demonstrates not only _that_ Erikson finds the configuration to be fundamental to the process of understanding but also _why_ the configuration is so significant. Its importance is established by the rich associations which it has on many levels of the person's experience.

Standing by itself the configuration was quite uninteresting. This

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[1] _Ibid._, p. 71.

[2] _Ibid._, p. 57.

[3] _Ibid._, p. 74.

[4] Above, pp. 119-122.

"immediate meaning" or this first "finite province of meaning," to use Schutz's terminology,[1] is within the dream. Only because it points beyond itself to "another province of meaning" is the image a significant one. These "associations" or "connections" or "valences" which relate the first province of meaning with other provinces make the configuration an interesting and important clue to knowledge.

Moreover, Erikson is eager to preserve the possibility that an image may point to more than one other province of meaning. This is demonstrated in his interpretation of the "empty face" dream used to introduce the multivalent quality of Erikson's configurations. One of the valences to which Erikson points is the classical Freudian interpretation of such an image as a "symbol of the feminine void."[2] Erikson does not deny the value of this interpretation. In fact, he works with it later on in his therapy with that client. What Erikson obviously resists is the sense that this is the one correct valence for this image. This is consistent with Erikson's misgivings generally about Freud's "originology."[3]

One other interesting aspect of this passage is that this is one of the few times that Erikson carefully selects the term "symbol" to make a point. Throughout the page in which he deals with this particular valence of the "empty face" image he consistently (five times) refers to this Freudian interpretation as a "symbol" and deliberately avoids using that term with reference to the other interpretations which he offers. He writes that "in the context of the 'classical' interpretation, the dream image would be primarily symbolic of a sexual idea which is to be warded off, in ours a representation of a danger to the continuous existence of individual identity."[1] In this passage Erikson implies that to call the face a "symbol" is to regard it as having one specific interpretation. According to this understanding the face of Medusa, in whatever form and under whatever circumstances it appears in a dream, always points in one direction -- to the feminine void.[2] Erikson seems to associate the term "symbol" with an interpretation which is too inflexible, one which insists that a specific image must always have one particular application, and he does not want to be confined to such a procedure. He obviously avoids using the term for his own interpretations here, and this may be a clue as to why Erikson uses the term so rarely in his work as a whole.

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[1] Above, pp. 70 and 71.

[2] Erikson, IR, p. 70.

[3] Above, p. 122.

In this passage, then, as in others, Erikson seeks to preserve the multivalent character of the configurations with which he works. In doing so, however, he does not actually use the term "multivalence." He is more inclined to use words from the psychoanalytic vocabulary, often the same words which Ricoeur found most helpful in opening up the symbolic dimensions of Freud's procedure.[3] Erikson speaks of this dream as a "condensation."[4] The dream is a condensation or microcosm which brings a wide range of associations together into one intensive image. Another technical word used by Erikson in speaking of this dream is its "overdetermination," which he defines as "a condensed code transmitting a number of other messages, from other life situations, seemingly removed from the therapy."[1] In speaking of a humorous dream which George Bernard Shaw once had (of the 'governor' with a goose under one arm and ham under the other banging his head against the wall, thinking that he was pushing open the gate) Erikson described it as a "condensed scene standing for others of a like kind."[2] In another instance he describes dreams as "sensitive indicators."[3] Erikson himself is quite clear that it is these many valences beyond the immediate context of the dream which make the configuration valuable for his work.

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[1] Erikson, IR, p. 70.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Above, pp. 90-92.

[4] Erikson, IR, pp. 63, 64, and 67.

One of the strongest statements which Erikson makes about the symbolic significance of a configuration is made with reference to rituals. One of the criteria he recognizes as basic to ritualized procedures is "a sense of symbolic actuality surpassing the reality of each participant and of the deed itself."[4] It is to be noted that Erikson does not deny the immediate reality of the participants and the acts in the ritual any more than he would deny the reality of a dream image. What he does contend is that the "symbolic actuality" is the multivalence of the ritual, its connections with many levels of human experience. The participants and the actions constitute the ritual as the "first finite province of meaning," but the surpassing significance of the act is found in the "other provinces of meaning" to which it points.

The full amplitude of these associations is best unfolded if they are pursued in two different dimensions -- the longitudinal and the horizontal.[1]

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[1] Ibid., p. 64.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 145.

[3] Ibid., p. 147.

[4] Erikson, ORM, p. 343.

2. Multivalence is longitudinal

As Ricoeur made clear in his investigation of Freud[2] the archeological task of digging into the past is actually on the same line of continuity as the teleological concern with the future. Both are moving in the "longitudinal" dimension.

There is no ambiguity on this matter in Erikson's work. He saw dream life, for example, in its association with both the past and with the future. "Dream life [serves] to make one meaningfully patterned past of all [previous experience] and to bring this past into line with anticipated reality."[3] In dreams he saw both the function of the censor with relation to the past and also the function of the sponsor with relation to the future.[4] This terminology bears striking resemblance to Ricoeur's references to symbols as "hidden" with regard to the past and "given" in terms of the future.[5]

The great weight which Erikson gives to identity in his theoretical pattern reflects the same assumption of a continuum extending both to the past and to the future. No identity is adequate unless it is both rooted realistically in a person's previous experience and at the same time formed in anticipation of the future.[1] The functioning of the ego is concerned with a synthesizing process embracing not only the dynamics of one's personal history but expectations for a "foreseeable future."[2]

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[1] Erikson himself does not use this classification explicitly in connection with the overdetermined quality of configurations, though he does use it to describe the directions which compensations may take (IYC, p. 100), and the two are not entirely unrelated.

[2] Above, pp. 98 and 99.

[3] Erikson, IR, p. 200.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 198.

[5] Above, pp. 83 and 84.

The world-image is a configuration of even greater magnitude. When Erikson is making the point that a woman exercises her function as a mother only in a broad cultural context, he explains that a cohesive world-image has much to do with providing the necessary stability for the mother. In that context he refers to "an all-enveloping world-image tying past, present, and future into a convincing pattern of providence."[3] Erikson clearly sees configurations pointing to the full longitudinal scale--future as well as past.

a. Archeology. As a therapist in the Freudian tradition Erikson is actively engaged in going back on the longitudinal scale and finding the past hidden or disguised in the configurational patterns. The "empty face" dream interpretation is no exception. Although one of the associations is with the immediate stage of therapy in which the patient was involved at the time of the dream, the others represent an archeological excursion into the past.

This goes as far back as his early associations with his mother in the years of early childhood. Those early years are the happy hunting ground of psychoanalysis. Erikson remains a disciple of the psychoanalytic tradition in acknowledging the crucial importance of those early years. In the development of his epigenetic life cycle three of the eight stages of life occur in the first five years of a person's life, and they correspond to the oral, anal, and pre-genital stages of Freud.[1]

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 87; IR, p. 91; YML, 14.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 211.

[3] Erikson, IR, p. 116.

Yet, though he recognizes the crucial importance of those early years both in his therapeutic work and in his theoretical constructions, he believes that Freud went too far in defining man's emotions and decisions as the result of the experience of those first few years. He sees an "implicit fatalism"[2] or a "new sense of predestination"[3] in this approach and labelled it "originology."

This criticism of Freud is not an off-hand remark. It is repeated a number of times in Erikson's work.[4] Erikson's disavowal of this Freudian emphasis is significantly helpful in preserving the multivalent quality of his configurations. Although Ricoeur is able to point out the multivalent quality deeply rooted in Freud's work, the more usual application of Freud's thought has been to see every symbol as a signifier pointing directly to an experience of early childhood and then acknowledging that experience as the "reason" a person feels and acts the way he does. That procedure allows for only one valence and reduces the power of symbols by explaining them away. Because Erikson refuses to accept such "originology," he is free to see his configurations pointing to many levels of experience. In the instance of this dream of an empty face he recognizes valences moving from the dream to four other levels besides the experience of early childhood. He has escaped the reductionism which has confined many of the disciples of Freud.

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[1] Erikson, CS, pp. 72-92.

[2] Erikson, "The Human Life Cycle," p. 286.

[3] Erikson, "Autobiographic Notes on the Identity Crisis," p. 752.

[4] Erikson, IR, p. 114; YML, p. 18; GT, p. 98; Godkin Lectures I, 351.

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b. Teleology. Erikson's criticism of "originology" is designed to open the way to the future as well as the past. He believes that we "must find a balance between the 'backward' view of genetic reconstruction and the 'forward' formulation of progressive differentiation in growth and development."[1]

Freud spoke to the needs of his day. At that time people knew who they were but needed to be released from the inhibitions which prevented them from moving in that direction. However, Erikson recognizes the predicament of the man of his day to be quite different. His patients need to know who they might become.[2] This accounts for Erikson's concern with the problem of identity.[3] It also demonstrates why he is concerned that the configurations with which he works have reference to the future as well as to the past. Freud could view the Oedipal complex as restricting man's options. Erikson insists that it not only "constricts the horizon of the permissible; it also sets the direction toward the possible"[4] and goes on to demonstrate that concretely in the case of Luther.[5]

Identity configurations are particularly rich in teleological qualities. One of their primary functions is to create some possible alternatives for the future.[6]

Other configurations also have this anticipatory direction as a part of their significance. In the dream interpretation with which this section on multivalence begins the dream image of the empty face was interpreted with reference to past and present situations. However, the patient's desire for his "future sanity" was an important ingredient in the entire process of dream interpretation.[1] The purpose of the entire therapeutic encounter was oriented toward the future.[2] Both the "calling" and the "identity" of the patient, with their implications for the future were involved in the interpretation of the dream. Back of it all is the assumption by Erikson that the dreamer returns to his early experience and from there "he thinks himself forward again."[3]

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[1] Erikson, "The Human Life Cycle," p. 286.

[2] Erikson, CS, p. 279.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 282.

[4] Erikson, IYC, p. 121.

[5] Erikson, YML, p. 73.

[6] Erikson, IR, p. 171; IYC, pp. 30 and 186.

Erikson's configurations, it is clear, extend the full length of the longitudinal dimension, extending to the future as well as to the past.

3. Multivalence is horizontal

This dimension of multivalence was not developed by Ricoeur and is not mentioned in Chapter III. This is a way of saying that the valences of Erikson's configurations reach not only forward and backward in time but also laterally to other aspects of human experience. The configuration evident in a child's play construction, for example, is related to realms of the child's life quite apart from that play activity. It may be associated with a characteristic physical movement, a portion of his body, his relationship to a family member, the role he plays in society, a religious ritual, or the arrangement of the furniture in his home.

This dimension is related to Schutz's "finite provinces of meaning." The play construction is the first finite province of meaning which functions within its own sphere of space. Each of the other provinces of meaning is something beyond the immediate meaning. It is true that those other aspects of experience have a life apart from this play construction, but they are given new significance and placed in a new perspective by the play activity.

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[1] Erikson, IR, p. 67.

[2] Erikson, "Autobiographical Notes on the Identity Crisis," p. 748.

[3] Erikson, IR, p. 184.

A few examples will demonstrate this horizontal multivalence. The dream of the empty face was interpreted by Erikson in terms of a longitudinal scale. Yet, it also had a horizontal dimension, relating not only to other times in his life but also to aspects of his life which were quite divergent -- his religious life, his vocation, his therapy, his personal relationships to mother and father (later therapy unfolded the substitution of grandfather for his father in many instances), his sense of his own masculinity, and even his own genitals (depending on how much weight is given to Freud's interpretation of Medusa). That is quite a range of valences for one empty face. No wonder that the patient regarded the dream as the most disturbing one in his life and that he came to Erikson in a highly agitated state.[1]

This same horizontal amplitude of a dream image is demonstrated in Erikson's treatment of Freud's Count Thun dream. The dream itself was much more complex and dynamic than the "empty face" dream. It had four different segments, all of them reflecting a "need to pass." One, for example, was an urgent need to get out of town with the railway lines as the way of escape. However, all the stations were closed, thus preventing him from leaving town.

This image points to: (1) his immediate need to urinate; (2) his altercation with the railroad officials before he boarded the train on which he had the dream; (3) his sighting of Count Thun that day and the reminder of the social barrier making it difficult to pass from one social status to another in Austrian society; and (4) his own ambition for professional achievement in spite of his father's remark that he would "come to nothing."[1]

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[1] Erikson, IR, p. 57.

It is with reference to this specific dream interpretation that Erikson calls attention to the extent to which such a configuration reaches "into all the co-ordinates of the adult man's actuality."[2]

Similar multivalence into many aspects of life experience is demonstrated by the configurations which Erikson portrays in his major studies in identity. The theology of Luther pivots on the fundamental motif of justification before the father. This theological position was no mere academic exercise. It drew its strength from the many associations it had with other aspects of his experience: (1) the relationship with his earthly father, Hans Luther; (2) his trouble with constipation (bowel movements already in infancy offer the first occasion for the struggle between a person's own will and the authority over him); (3) his vocation (monastery chosen over the legal profession); (4) ritual (the faltering in his first saying of the Mass); (5) his moment in history (generally uncritical acceptance of authority mixed with some doubts about it).[3]

All of the other configurations in Erikson's work -- play configurations, rituals, and world images -- confirm this association between the configuration and a wide variety of aspects of experience on a horizontal as well as longitudinal scale.

However, the same fundamental question which plagued the longitudinal dimension of multivalence must be dealt with once again here. Is it not true that in every instance one of the aspects of experience included in the associations has been a sexual (or excretory) organ of the body? Since Erikson is working within the psychoanalytic tradition of Freud, do these physiological organs not become the point of reference for "explaining" all of the other elements? Finally, if this is the case, then is not any attempt to speak of multivalence actually fraudulent because there is only one significant valence -- the connection to the genital body organs?

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[1] Erikson, IR, pp. 185-201.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 197.

[3] Erikson, IR, p. 204.

The challenge is a serious one in view of the basic assumptions of this project regarding the nature of symbols. Moreover, there are some good reasons for pressing the challenge. Ernest Jones, one of the primary interpreters of Freud, argues that in the interpretation of symbols the sexual aspect is always the signified and never the signifier.[1] According to this position the valence goes only one way, and the multivalent function of symbols is eliminated. Every symbol is a covert sexual expression which only needs to be properly understood to see its real significance.

Erikson does not isolate himself from a basically Freudian orientation. His epigenetic life cycle describes human development in terms of eight fundamental stages. Each of these stages is related to some bodily organ.[2] When he speaks of the dynamics of identity formation, Erikson includes soma, along with polis and ego, as a major element in the process.[3]

But it is exactly at this point that Erikson's approach differs from that of Ernest Jones. Although Erikson does take the somatic dimension of human experience seriously, he does not regard it as the only one or even as the primary one by which all other activity is to be explained. He affirms Freud because in an age of denial Freud restored man's willingness to accept the importance of his own bodily functions. He believes, however, that those who slavishly follow Freud long after that age has passed fail to do justice to the greatness of the master. So he draws on the basic insights of Freud but places them in a wider context.[1] Coles, a psychiatrist himself, shows how Erikson's procedure in his analysis of the Yurok tribe refuses to follow such a reductionist methodology even though the material could easily have been handled in that way.[2] Instead he regarded the somatic aspect of Yurok life as only one of the many clues to a complex culture.[3]

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[1] Above, p. 86.

[2] Erikson, CS, pp. 247-274; IYC, pp. 91-141.

[3] Erikson, Ibid., pp. 36 and 37.

In the three illustrations given for horizontal multivalence a body organ mode was included in each. However, in not one of those instances was the somatic aspect of experience used by Erikson as the ultimate point of reference. In the instance of the "empty face" dream he argued that it would be more appropriate to understand the Medusa motif as the lack of a sense of identity rather than as a fear of castration.[4]

What becomes clear upon a careful study of Erikson's approach is his emphasis on the mutual interdependence of all the valences of a symbol upon one another. No one point of reference is the explanation for all the others. No one is primary, the one on which all of the others are dependent. Instead, each association modifies, enhances, intensifies, and qualifies the others. The references to bodily organs play a critical role in this mutual interaction. To leave them out would be to deny a powerful aspect of human life. They are neither to be ignored nor deified.

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[1] Erikson, "The Human Life Cycle," 286.

[2] Robert Coles, Erik H. Erikson: The Growth of His Work, p. 59.

[3] Ibid., pp. 51-59.

[4] Erikson, IR, p. 70.

This mutual interdependence becomes evident not only in such major configurations as identity and world-image but also in Erikson's exposition of his eight stages of human life. Each of those stages is related to some physical aspect of experience, and that somatic function plays a key role in Erikson's exposition of that stage. Even in this segment of his work, however, Erikson does not allow the body organs to serve as univocal representations for each of the stages.

There are two important ways in which Erikson qualifies the hegemony of somatic images over all others. The first is by relying on aspects of life other than the function of a particular body organ to point to the key modalities of each stage.

When he describes the "stage of initiative," for example, Erikson draws on a wide range of experiences as elements which give shape to the "intrusive mode" which characterizes this stage:

> (1) the intrusion into space by vigorous locomotion
> (2) the intrusion into the unknown by consuming curiosity
> (3) the intrusion into other people's ears and minds by the aggressive voice
> (4) the intrusion upon or into other bodies by physical attack
> (5) the thought of the phallus intruding the female body.[1]

While the last of the list is described as "the most frightening of all," it is by no means regarded as the exclusive point of reference by which all other aspects of life are to be defined or interpreted.

Already very early in his writing Erikson recognizes the importance of multiple-referents for a particular motif. In 1937 he sees the eliminative mode being expressed (1) in the elimination of waste products by a body aperture, (2) by the spilling of a bottle's content, (3) by throwing objects

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 116.

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out of a window, or (4) by pushing a person out of one's physical sphere."[1] All four expressions are viewed by Erikson as "interchangeable manifestations" of a common image of elimination.

The characteristics of each stage are understood by Erikson to be "configurationally similar activities and fantasies."[2] The configuration evoked at each stage is not unilaterally related to the body organ. Instead, the body organ is only one of the many aspects of life with "configurational similarity," each of which evokes the others.

As a result, what Ricoeur could come to only after an intensive study of Freud is much more accessible in the work of Erikson: the most fundamental reality of human life (e.g., instinctual energy in Freud or the eight basic stages in Erikson) is not directly accessible by way of a single referent which "explains" all the others. Each configuration has valences to many aspects of experience, and to make any one of these bonds the exclusive one would be to reduce the significance and the fulness of the configuration. Its richness as a symbolic representation is that it functions most adequately in a lively interaction between the signifier and the signified.[3] Such a symbol is not the pale reflection of a hard reality which it represents but instead itself constitutes the reality which man experiences.

The second way in which Erikson avoids the possibility of a hegemony by somatic images is by his recognition that each bodily organ may represent a wide range of modalities. This means that when a valence is established between a configuration and a body organ the configuration is not immediately defined by that association because the body organ itself may represent a wide range of expressions.

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[1] Erikson, "Configurations in Play--Clinical Notes," pp. 161 and 162.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 116.

[3] Above, pp. 87 and 88.

This is evident already in the earliest of the eight stages, even though the range of expressions is not enlarged by previous stages as are the later ones. The body organ which corresponds to this stage is the mouth, although respiration and the tactile sense are also prominent.[1] These are receiving organs, and Erikson names this first stage the incorporative one.

There is such a broad variety of ways, however, in which this "incorporative" mode develops that it covers a spectrum all the way from "basic trust" to "basic mistrust."[2] In one description of this stage Erikson refers to these specific examples as alternatives which may emerge, all from this one spectrum:

-- dependency on powerful providers
-- sense of being preferred over others
-- mass addiction
-- nostalgia for a lost paradise
-- trusting the capacity of one's own organs to cope with his urges
-- withdrawing into one's self
-- avaricious appropriation[3]

All of these are related to the "oral stage," the first of the eight stages of the life cycle.

As though this range of possibilities were not complex enough for one body organ, Erikson portrays another range of "auxiliary modes." These are the modes that a body organ has which are related to other stages. In the case of the oral zone this extends beyond the incorporative mode of its own stage to the eliminative mode (spitting up and out), the retentive mode

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[1] Erikson, CS, p. 74.

[2] *Ibid*., p. 80.

[3] Erikson, IYC, pp. 96-107.

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(firm closing of the lips), and even an intrusive mode (fastening of itself upon the nipple and the breast.)[1]

When the most primitive of all the organs offers such a variety of options within Erikson's methodology, it is not possible for a body organ (the mouth or any other) to be used as a single point of reference to give a univocal, clear "explanation" of any configuration. It is, instead, only one among a great many valences all of which contribute to give a configuration its full amplitude.

Considerable time has been devoted to the physiological valences of a configuration. This has been quite deliberate because any systematic treatment of symbols has a persistent temptation to weaken the full amplitude of a symbol by giving excessive attention to one type of valence. Some may focus on social and cultural aspects, some on economic aspects, some on political aspects, and some on intellectual aspects. The temptation of anyone operating from a psychoanalytic background is to emphasize body organs and functions so heavily that the other valences are weakened. Therefore, this is the point where multivalence may easily be denied and symbols reduced to pale reflections of reality. Having demonstrated that the multivalent quality of Erikson's configurations is sustained also with reference to their somatic valences, it can be concluded that this multivalent function is assured.

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The configurations with which Erikson works are much richer than mere patterns of habitual repetition or of imitation. They are unique for individuals, they are powerful enough to orient man in the world, and they

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[1] Erikson, CS, p. 73.

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have rich multivalent bonds. Without question they exercise symbolic functions. This establishes sufficient similarity between configurations and symbols so that the dynamics by which these configurations are formed can appropriately be used in this dissertation as a model for the way in which symbols are shaped.

Yet, the differences which remain between configurations and symbols must also be noted. The first distinction to be made between the two is one which Erikson himself makes in one of his rare references to symbols. It is worth considering in some detail.

Erikson is giving a series of examples of resistance and transference in the play therapy he uses with children. He shows how the defenses of patients are caught off-guard when, through the "metaphoric and symbolical" use of toys, the children reveal what they would not dare to make known in real life.[1] He contemplates how these "tricks of play language" should be identified. Should they be called symbolic, or would it be more appropriate to call them metaphors, analogies, and allusions? In the end he prefers not to call them symbolic.

While he is wrestling with the issue, however, he offers a concise description of what he understands by a symbol. In comparison to a metaphor or analogy, "a symbol, it seems, should be definitely of a higher order, very condensed and abstracted in its form, super-individual in its meaning, and treated with a high degree of affectual inhibition and sublimation."[2] He illustrates this with the account of Mary, who demonstrated in her play and in her conversation a "raptured admiration for shining locomotives" and concludes that "'shining locomotive' has become a symbol of admired paternal power."[1]

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[1] Erikson, Studies in the Interpretation of Play, pp. 664 and 665.

[2] Ibid., p. 664.

There are times, according to this passage, when play configurations take on the proportions of a symbol. However, that is the case only when they manifest a particularly "high degree of affectual inhibition and sublimation" and when they are "very condensed." According to this passage, then, configurations cannot be automatically identified as symbols, but they do exercise such symbolic functions as multivalence and may, upon occasion, exercise them with sufficient intensity that they achieve that higher order called "symbols."

There are other distinctions to be made between configurations and symbols, distinctions to be made by moving outside of Erikson's work. A second distinction is that many of the configurations which Erikson uses are private rather than public, individual rather than cultural. This is particularly evident when the identity configuration is regarded as the culmination of the form in Erikson's work. Such a private image is obviously not the equivalent of a cultural object.

Is it possible to understand the identity configuration as the internalization of a cultural object? This concept, as offered both by Parsons[2] and George Herbert Mead,[3] establishes a connection between individual identity and cultural objects. However, the dynamics by which identity is formed, according to Erikson, is more complex than is suggested by the concept of internalization. For Erikson the configuration of the individual person, whether it be a play construction, a dream, or an identity configuration, is shaped by many other elements in addition to cultural symbols, and it is brought into shape by an intricate process which synthesizes all of these factors. While this makes it more difficult to identify symbols with configurations, it is the richness of this dynamic which makes Erikson's work a promising source for understanding the dynamics of symbolic formation.

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[1] Ibid., p. 665.

[2] Parsons and Shils, Toward a General Theory of Action, p. 22.

[3] George Herbert Mead, Mind, Self, and Society (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1934), p. 134.

A third distinction needs to be noted. Configurations, whether private or public, are often not self-consciously held by the person or by the culture. They are implicit and hidden, and it requires the probing of a specialist to uncover their symbolic functions. The significance of a dream or a play configuration is not evident to the person who created them until the analyst assists him in an interpretation that is helpful. The significance of the "empty face" dream, for example, was not understood until Erikson unfolded it to the young man who had the dream. The same can be true for cultural symbols in Erikson's work. The Yurok were not consciously aware of the relation of the architecture of the sweat house to their life-style. They built the house with the prescribed openings because that was the way it had always been done. It was the right way.[1]

Throughout his work Erikson's chief concern is to discover those hidden configurations which give coherence and significance to the life of a person or a society. His is the work of a diagnostician. He approaches his subject searching for clues to that end. As a result,whether he is dealing with interpersonal relationships or with an individual's own life cycle or with a religious ritual, Erikson looks at each one with a view toward the light it will offer to that inner, all-important configuration. Symbols-as-cultural-objects have a place in the formation and discovery of those configurations, and they themselves are, in turn, affected by the configurations, but it is the configuration and not the symbol which is the focus of Erikson's attention. In the instance of the Sioux nation cited earlier[1] it was the method of child care, the procedure of gathering food, and the Sun Dance which offered key clues to the configuration of generosity and ferocity-at-denial which Erikson discovered as the central world-image of the society. The symbol, the Sun Dance, served as one of the means for arriving at the configuration. All this makes it clear that Erikson does not conceive of his work as a proposal for the way in which cultural symbols develop.

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[1] Parsons points out that this is often the case in the study of cultural symbols. They are so fragmented and hidden that "it is necessary for the student of culture to uncover the implicit culture." (Toward a General Theory of Action, p. 22.)

The task of this dissertation, then, is one of analyzing carefully the dynamics by which configurations are formed, a matter which is a central concern in Erikson's work, and then, using that set of dynamics as a model, to offer some specific proposals for the dynamics by which symbols are formed. For the formation of configurations to serve as a model for the formation of symbols it is not necessary that the two be identical. However, it is necessary that there be sufficient affinity between the two to make the connection between the two processes convincing, and the results of this chapter do, I believe, establish an adequate congruity.

Erikson himself gives some support for this procedure in his latest lecture. In commenting on the relationship of psychoanalysis and history, the Inner and the Outer, he emphasizes that the two need to interact, each informing the other.[2] This dissertation uses the dynamics for the formation

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[1] Above, p. 123.

[2] Erik H. Erikson, "Dimensions of the New Identity," Second Annual Jefferson Lectures, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities, delivered May 1 and 2, 1973, in Washington, D.C., I, 2. (Unpublished manuscript of the draft; Roman numerals refer to the lecture.)

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of those inner configurations to shed some light on the development of those outer cultural objects.

Thus, it has been established that the symbolic functions of multivalence as well as of orientation and form-giving are exercised by Erikson's configurations. Moreover, it has become clear that these symbolic functions are not incidental to these configurations but are actually fundamental to them. The symbolic functions are what make configurations perform their unique task in Erikson's work. Because these functions exercise such a primary role in Erikson's use of configurations, it is appropriate to identify these configurations as symbols.

The successful completion of that step is a crucial one for this project. Since Erikson's configurations can be regarded as symbols, the way is now clear to use Erikson's careful description of the dynamics by which configurations (specifically identity configurations) are shaped as a model for the formation of symbols.

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PART III

THE FORMATION OF SYMBOLS

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CHAPTER VI

MUTUAL ACTIVATION

A. A Model for Mutual Activation

1. The galaxy as a model

The galactic model from astronomy is one evoked by Erikson's description of mutual activation. It stands in contrast to the planetary model of astronomical systems.

The solar system is understood according to the planetary model. At its center is a massive body which is much larger than the other bodies in the system. The movement of all the other bodies (the planets) in the system occurs almost entirely because of the gravitational pull of the huge central body (the sun). Of course, the orbits of the planets are slightly affected by the presence of the other planets, and the course of the sun is ever-so-minutely shifted by the planets which revolve around it. These influences, however, are negligible as a person observes the movement of the bodies in the planetary system.

What Harlow Shapley proposed in 1918 on the basis of his observations at the Mount Wilson Observatory was an alternate model for understanding the relation of the stars to one another. He located the 93 known globular clusters on three different planes. (See the charts on page 161.) In a calculation which was later confirmed as being remarkably accurate, Shapley was able to use these locations as the basis for establishing the direction of the center of all those clusters. Two aspects of Shapley's proposal

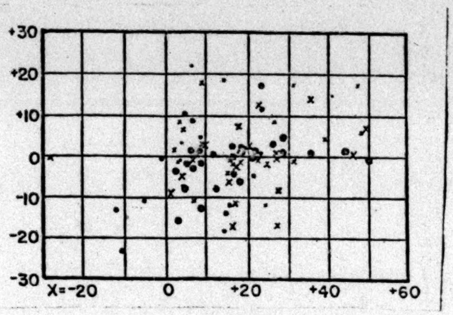

FIGURE 2.
Distribution of the globular clusters in the Galaxy (XY plane).[1]

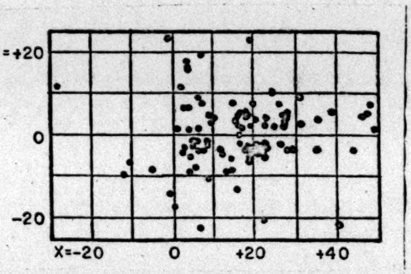

FIGURE 3.
Distribution of the globular clusters in the XZ plane.[1]

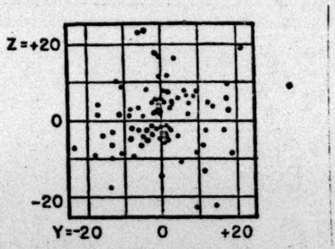

FIGURE 4.
Distribution of the globular clusters in the YZ plane.[1]

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[1] Harlow Shapley, "From Heliocentric to Galactocentric," reprinted in Source Book in Astronomy, 1900-1950, ed. Harlow Shapley (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960), pp. 321 and 322.

were especially striking. One was that the sun was far from the center of this system -- 65,000 light years removed.[1] The second was that there was no other single, massive body around which all the rest of the bodies in the system moved. Instead, he described a nucleus composed of a group of stars occupying an extensive region (65,000 light years in diameter) at the center of the system.[2] This model was confirmed in 1925 when Edwin Hubble, also through observations made at Mount Wilson, identified the Andromeda nebula and others as separate galaxies lying outside the one which Shapley had described. The Milky Way Galaxy became recognized as one among many such configurations. As the spiral shape of those other galaxies became known, the galactic model of a system without one large central body was confirmed.

Therefore, by 1930 Sir James Jeans was able to contrast such a system with the planetary model:

> Each star [in a galaxy] moves in a complicated orbit under the gravitational attraction of all the other stars of the galactic system. . . . [By contrast, in a planetary system] the orbit of a planet round the sun is easily calculated because only two bodies are involved, the planet and the sun.[3]

The model which was brought into clear shape by Sir James Jeans is one in which all the stars of the system, in varying degrees, interact with one another with a mutual gravitational attraction, establishing the shape and the movement of the galaxy.

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[1] Pierre Rousseau, Man's Conquest of the Stars. Trans. Michael Bullock (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1961), p. 318.

[2] Shapley, "From Heliocentric to Galactocentric," p. 324.

[3] James Jeans, The Universe Around Us (rev. ed.), (New York: The Macmillan Company), 1931, p. 206.

2. The stars in Erikson's galaxy

All of this stands as a helpful parallel to Erikson's dynamic model of the formation of configurations. In Erikson's work each configuration is formed by the interaction of a great many elements in human life--man's social relations, his physiological life, and his psychological experience. The dynamic of interaction being described is that between these elements as they are in the process of shaping a configuration.

Prominent in that interaction, according to Erikson, is the multitude of social interactions between persons, especially those intimate relationships with parents and peers and lovers. That was clear already in the description of the configurations in the last chapter. It will soon be evident in this chapter that these relationships between persons are regarded here as helpful models for understanding the interaction between less personal elements in the action system as well.

a. The complexity of his model. In his 1973 Jefferson Lectures Erikson develops the image of what it means to "stand up" in a way which demonstrates how rich and diverse are the elements which contribute to the formulation of a configuration. First he clarifies that to stand up also implies that "I could fall." Then he proceeds to portray the dimensions which establish the significance of standing/falling:

> Below, then, there is what is "basic," so (one) I can stand on it, but there is what I will learn to consider "base" and beneath me -- I must not sink that low. Ahead of me are those who I may want to run after or whom I cannot catch up with. Above me are those who are bigger than I am and who will lift me up, or let me down, or even put me down. Those "behind me," too, are in different categories: they may be backing me up; or simply stay behind, or again, they may be "after me." . . . . Very fascinating also is a study on this basis of the persistent meaning of right and left . . . that atavistic allocation of rightness to dexterity.[1]

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[1] Erikson, "Dimensions of the New Identity," II, 9 and 10.

He suggested the image of a weathervane as he outlined those six dimensions --below, ahead, above, behind, right and left. Erikson adds that there may also be combinations of these directions--ahead and above, ahead and below, behind and above, behind and below.[1]

One additional feature of the directions as Erikson describes them in this passage is that each of them has a positive as well as a negative possibility in its contribution to the total configuration. Consequently, Erikson's action model, as it has been described here, has six directions with an almost indefinite number of combinations of them also included. Each of the directions, furthermore, exercises a positive as well as a negative influence on the others in the interplay. As though such a field of interaction were not already complex enough, Erikson emphasizes that this is only one aspect of the configuration of "standing up." There is, he insists, an Inner as well as an Outer side to this image, and then proceeds carefully to detail the corresponding directions, each with its positive and negative effects, which are to be found in the Inner world.[2]

Moreover, the actuality of life is based on the interaction between the Inner structure and the Outer structure. There is "all kind of traffic between the inner and the outer world."[3] Their vital interaction is most vivid in his "psycho-historical" studies, as in Young Man Luther and in Gandhi's Truth.[4] Erikson begins his Jefferson Lecture with a clarification of that method. Although he sees the awkward double-word as a transitional label for what will sooner or later be acceptable as good methodology for the study of the whole man, at this moment in such study it is important to emphasize the mutual activation of the Inner world and the Outer world.[1]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Erikson, "Dimensions of the New Identity," II, 11.

[3] Ibid.; Erikson, IR, p. 176.

[4] The creative methodology he established in those works has attracted considerable attention as is evidenced by the symposium on the subject held at the University of California at Santa Barbara in January of 1972 with Dr. Erikson as an honored guest and by the dialogue in the February 22, March 8 and May 3, 1973, issues of the New York Review of Books.

As complex as this structure already appears, there is still another dimension to be considered. Each of the directions mentioned in both its positive and negative forces and its inner and outer aspects has, in addition to all of those dimensions, also a past, a present, and a future. This added dimension has already been treated in considerable detail,[2] so it is necessary only to mention here that Erikson includes this dimension specifically in the Jefferson Lectures. There he unfolds how all the directions (above, behind, etc.) are not only to be found in the present context of standing/falling but also have a past dimension in the New Identity of the Jeffersonian Americans.[3]

* * *

Already implications for the formation of a symbol are suggested. It is as though a symbol is sustained in a gravitational-magnetic field, enabled to stand as a cultural object with symbolic force because of its valences of attraction and repulsion to what is below, behind, ahead, above, etc.

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[1] Erikson, "Dimensions of the New Identity," I, 2. The lecture as it was delivered spelled out this point much more carefully than the written draft indicates. In the lecture he emphasized that the direction "should go both ways." The application of the insights of psychoanalysis to history is only half of the project. Psychoanalysis also needs the insight of historical analysis. A similar statement was made in the Godkin lectures.

[2] See pp. 119-122 above.

[3] Erikson, "Dimensions of the New Identity," I, 12-14.

It belongs to the Inner as well as the Outer world and reaches out both to the past and to the future in order to exercise its strength in the present.[1]

b. Charting his model. An interplay of such complexity is difficult to organize in any systematic way. Erikson classifies the major elements involved in the interaction which gives form to a configuration when he outlines three "orders"--*soma*, *polis*, and *psyche*.[2]

Soma represents the physiological dimension of life. Each of the eight stages of Erikson's epigenetic life cycle has a physiological attachment. The first, incorporative stage, for example, is related primarily to the mouth but also to breathing and to the eyes.[3]

Polis includes the wide range of societal involvement in the process. It includes all the aspects of society-at-large: political dynamics, childhood education, intellectual climate, the state of technology, the economics, the architecture, the rituals, the marital and family patterns, and the world-image which holds it together. The more intimate, personal relationships are also included in *polis*: the relations between mother and child, teacher and student, leader and led, therapist and client as well as those between peers and siblings and sexual partners. It is often through these more intimate relationships that the influence of the wider society is mediated. In Erikson's model, then, interaction among people is part of the dynamics of the process by which configurations are formed as is interaction between various body functions and between person and societal structures.

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[1] The format of the dissertation during these last three chapters will follow the pattern which begins here. A line of three asterisks will be used to signal a transition. The material following those asterisks and continuing to the next heading relates Erikson's dynamics specifically to symbolic formation.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 289.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 98.

In the psyche Erikson emphasizes the integrating powers of the person. Instances of this order would be dreams, play constructions, and above all the sense of identity.

Even these three orders with their magnitude do not include the full range of elements which Erikson includes in his model. Such elements as the geography in which a person and a society is located have considerable influence on development but do not fit into any of those three orders.[1] Neither does man's mind or intellect, which is an important part of the whole picture for Erikson.[2] Only such a diverse and rich set of sources will be adequate to describe the full complexity of all the elements which contribute to the shaping of a configuration. Erikson's use of such a wide variety of resources is one of the features which suggests the great potential of his work.

However, it is not only the numbers of elements which is important here but also the process of vital interaction into which Erikson places them. He insists that "each order [soma, polis, and psyche] guards a certain intactness and also offers a leeway of optional or at least workable choices, while man lives in all three and must work out their mutual complementation and their 'eternal' contraditions."[3] Each element has its own rightful position in the interaction, and yet each is involved in a continual interplay with all the others.

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[1] Erikson, Observations on the Yurok: Childhood and World Image, p. 258.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 245; Erikson, IR, pp. 141, 147 and 199; Erikson, Godkin Lecture I, 272; Erikson, YML, pp. 87-90.

[3] Erikson, IYC, p. 289.

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Already in his first major work in 1950 Erikson had identified these three orders. There he called them "processes" which had been isolated from one another by their study in separate methods or disciplines.

> Clinical training should include all three methods. [Then] we cannot escape the conviction that the meaning of an item which may be 'located' in one of the three processes is co-determined by its meaning in the other two. An item in one process gains relevance by giving significance to and receiving significance from items in the others.[1]

Erikson himself was keenly aware of the difficulty in charting the locations of individual elements in any order or discipline because he recognized the critical importance of the interaction between all such orders.

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c. Re-organizing his model. There are, of course, many other ways of charting the interaction in human experience. One that is helpful in giving additional clarification to Erikson's proposal is that of Parsons and Shils. Their "General Theory of Action" suggests three interacting systems -- personality, social system, and culture.[2] Erikson divides the personality system into soma and psyche and by doing so offers a more careful distinction between the contribution made by physiological elements and that made by the ego in integrating the various elements.

On the other hand, when Parsons and Shils distinguish between the social and the cultural, between interpersonal relations and cultural objects, they offer considerable help in clarifying the broad area of polis in Erikson's work. In the brief description of polis[3] the area naturally divided into more intimate and personal relationships, on the one hand,

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[1] Erikson, CS, p. 37.

[2] Parsons and Shils, Toward a General Theory of Action, p. 7.

[3] Above, p. 166.

and such cultural symbols as rituals and ideologies on the other.

Parsons and Shils point out that these two systems function differently. Cultural objects may be separated from the person or group where they originated and be passed on to others, evoking similar responses in other groups. They have an objectivity or a life of their own. That is not true of personal social relations because they cannot be separated from the people who are involved.[1] By including both the social and the cultural systems within the one category, polis, Erikson never makes this distinction explicitly.

In practice, however, Erikson makes a number of references which would support the Parsons-Shils distinction. The way that the mother relates to her infant child, even in the nursing of that infant, is affected by the cultural pattern in which she participates.[2] The relationship between man and wife develops in the context of a deeply rooted value system belonging to the culture.[3] The relationship between generations is mediated by ideology: "It is through their ideology that social systems enter into the fiber of the next generation."[4] In these instances as well as many others the cultural system plays a distinctive role as it interacts with the social system.

In one instance, when he joins the discussion of ritualization at the Royal Society of London, Erikson makes an explicit statement about symbols which allows for their more objective character as cultural objects with such a distinctive role. Included in a list of criteria for ritual actions is "a sense of symbolic actuality surpassing the reality of each participant and of the deed itself."[1] The symbol which is not dependent upon the immediate interaction of the persons performing it has the distinctive mark of a cultural system in the sense designated by Parsons and Shils.

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[1] Parsons and Shils, Toward a General Theory of Action, p. 160.

[2] Erikson, ORM, p. 338.

[3] Erikson, IYC, p. 265.

[4] Ibid., p. 134.

Even in this reference, however, one of Erikson's primary examples is the routine interaction between a mother and child upon getting up in the morning. Such a "ritual" has a considerable degree of habituation and of person-dependent interaction, and it is highly problematic as to whether such activity can be understood in terms of a symbol-as-cultural-object. It must also be acknowledged that even this reference to the "surpassing" quality of a symbol does not appear in a parallel list of criteria which Erikson had stated earlier in the same article.[2]

Thus, even in the reference by Erikson to "symbolic actuality" the basis for an explicit theory of the distinctive role played by symbols in human development is precarious to say the least. Erikson, it must be admitted, lacks the necessary theoretic grounding on this matter even though concrete instances occur regularly in his work. This is a point, then, where it becomes necessary to move beyond Erikson and to add symbols as another dimension to be included with _soma_, _polis_, and _psyche_.

This addition to Erikson's triad will be most helpful in understanding how symbols contribute to the formation of human consciousness. However, it also has implications for the central purpose of this paper, which concentrates on the way in which the symbols themselves come to be formed.

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[1] Erikson, ORM, p. 343.

[2] _Ibid._, p. 337.

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By adding symbols in an explicit way to the total interaction it will become clear that they, too, play a distinctive role in the formation of Erikson's configurations, especially the configuration of identity.[1] Therefore, when the formation of configurations is used as the model for the formation of symbols, it turns out that symbols are one of the elements which contribute to the evolution of a new symbol. This will emerge as one of the dynamics to be included in the total process, so it is helpful to have this clarified early in the consideration of these dynamics.

B. The Dynamics of Mutual Activation

The fundamental dynamic of interaction portrayed in Erikson's work is that of mutual activation. As if to provide a text for this discussion, Erikson sums it up in one long sentence:

> Mutual activation is the crux of the matter; for human ego strength, while employing all means of testing reality, depends from stage to stage upon a network of mutual influences within which the person actuates others even as he is actuated, and within which the person is 'inspired with active properties,' even as he so inspires others.[2]

The mutual activation described here consists of (1) a network of mutual influences acting upon each other, (2) those same forces are acted upon by each other, and (3) the interaction evokes an 'inspiration' within all the elements in the network. These are three aspects of mutual activation through which this dynamic of symbolic formation is to be approached.

1. Genuine mutuality of interaction

The crucial distinction between the planetary system and the galactic system is that one central body dominates the planetary system, and all the other bodies in the system revolve around it and respond to its controlling influence, while the galactic system has no such central body but establishes its stability because every star in that system acts upon other stars in a "network of mutual influences."

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[1] Below, pp. 237 and 238.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 165

This was a radical step in the understanding of astronomy. It was drastic enough for Copernicus to remove the center of the universe from the earth to the sun. We are just beginning to penetrate the implications of that shift. However, to propose that there is no solid center to the universe at all seems to cast us onto such an undifferentiated sea of space that there is no stable point of reference. We have not begun to comprehend what that means for our existence.

Erikson opens the way for a shift which is just that radical for the understanding of symbolic formation. For him configurations are shaped by all those elements described earlier as "the stars in the galaxy."[1] No one of those elements is the central one in terms of which all the others are to be interpreted. Every one of them interacts with every other element, and so they create their own field of attraction and repulsion. Out of such mutual acting upon one another the elements give shape and power to a configuration.

a. Exposition of mutuality. Erikson's own exposition of such mutuality is given in his treatment of mutual activation. Although he used the term occasionally earlier in his writing, the subject is dealt with most comprehensively in "Reality and Actuality," an essay of 1962.[2] It was later revised and included in Insight and Responsibility.

Erikson works out his exposition by comparing Freud's concern with

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[1] Above, p. 162.

[2] Erik H. Erikson, "Reality and Actuality" in The Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, Vol. X (1962), pp. 451-473.

"reality" with his own emphasis on "actuality." Freud and the psychoanalysts who followed in his tradition were eager to free their clients from distortions and delusions and to enable them to see themselves and the world clearly -- as it really is.[1] The goal of psychoanalysis was self-enlightenment.[2] With such a perspective it served compatibly within the "ethos of the enlightenment" as a tool -- or even as a weapon -- of that era.[3] Reality was understood in empirical and rational terms.[4]

The result which Erikson observed was that the profession overestimated the value of the mere awareness of "reality" to the neglect of social and political participation.[5] People involved in the psychoanalytic process became experts in "analyzability."[6] They insisted on tearing away all the masks used in disguising and denying the psychic "reality"[7] but could not participate in societal interaction. Exposure became an end in itself.

More important than such an awareness of the inner reality and the ability to identify it, according to Erikson, is the capacity to become genuinely involved in the interaction in society. He uses the word "actuality" to describe this more active and dynamic aspect of reality because of its close relation to such verbs as "to activate" and "to actuate."[8]

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[1] Erikson, IR, p. 164.

[2] Erikson, CS, p. 282; Erikson, Insight and Freedom, p. 15.

[3] Erikson, IR, p. 209.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 163; Erikson, GT, p. 396.

[5] Erikson, IR, pp. 210, 174.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 166.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 209.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 164.

Such actuality is a "world of participation, shared with other participants with a minimum of defensive maneuvering and a maximum of mutual activation."[1]

It is in this context that the full significance of "symbolic actuality"[2] is to be viewed because Erikson's use of the term comes at the time when he is finding "actuality" to be a particularly helpful approach. The reference to "symbolic actuality" means that symbols participate fully as one of the elements in the interaction. However, they are only one of a great many elements involved in this mutual activation.

Mutual activation is what Erikson calls "the crux of the matter."[3] It points to mutual activation between ego and ego and between the ego and the total societal structure,[4] all involved in the historical process. It is the mutual activation of one generation with another generation,[5] the leader with those he leads.[6] It is people in different stages of life acting on one another, "cog-wheeling."[7] The mutual activation of inner motivations on the one hand with technical-social inventions on the other, is part of this grand picture.[8] Also, the present interacts with the past.[9]

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[1] Ibid., p. 165.

[2] Erikson, "The Ontogeny of Ritualization," pp. 343 and 524; see also above, p. 170.

[3] Erikson, IR, p. 165.

[4] Ibid., p. 175; YML, p. 14.

[5] Erikson, IYC, pp. 223-224.

[6] Erikson, IR, p. 201.

[7] Erikson, IR, p. 114.

[8] Ibid., p. 151.

[9] Ibid., p. 195.

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The individual stage of one person's development is engaged in mutual activation with his personal circumstances and with the historical and political process of his time.[1] The emerging strength of the individual and the vitality of social institutions serve to stimulate one another in their continuous interchange.[2] The nature of the mutual activation, as Erikson made clear in announcing the term, is a full and free active participation by all elements in the ensemble.

In his last lectureships Erikson takes his exposition of "actuality" even farther. First, he adds "factuality" to "reality" and "actuality," thus completing a troika. He uses factuality to emphasize the empirical aspect of life -- what is commonly agreed upon on the basis of techniques now available and accepted.[3] Then, he shifts the meaning of reality from a psychic reality to a "public vision." This is especially noticeable in the Godkin lectures in which the public vision plays such a prominent part.[4]

Finally, and most importantly, he makes it clear that mutual activation is not simply Number Three in the series but that all three -- factuality, reality, and actuality -- are active participants in the process of symbolization:

> What we think truth is is really a rare event when factuality, actuality, and reality combine in a compelling Gestalt which offers a decisive leeway to those who recognize all three.[5]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 165, 206f.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 141.

[3] Erikson, Godkin Lecture II, 260; Erikson, "Dimensions of the New Identity," Lecture I, 11.

[4] Erikson, Godkin Lecture, II, 260.

[5] Ibid.

> Only these three together provide the sense of self-evident truth which Jefferson was so singularly able to put into words.[1]

Once again, Erikson adds to the dimensions of interaction. He will allow no part of the ensemble to be only a passive recipient, a reflector of the other parts. Mutual activation describes the "total interplay"[2] of all the elements involved. Here even awareness, which Erikson had earlier described in contrast to actuality, is included as one of the forces which itself participates actively in the process.

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b. Contrasts to Mutuality. The significance of this dynamic of a full mutuality for the formation of symbols is best demonstrated by contrasting it to the work of two great masters, Marx and Freud, both of whom initiated Copernican revolutions but not galactic ones.

Karl Marx, for example, gave particular attention to the problem of the formation of symbols when he was making his break from Feuerbach and the "Young Hegelians" in the mid-1840's. While he does not use the word "symbol," he certainly is dealing with symbols when he refers to "all the different theoretical products and forms of consciousness, religion, philosophy, ethics, etc."[3]

It was in his "Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of the Right" that he wrote the famous dictim: "Religion is the opium of the people."[4] As the context demonstrates, Marx went on to apply the same criticisms to philosophy[1] and civil society.[2] It is not only about religion, then, but about all symbolic formations that Marx comments: "Religion is only the illusory sun about which man revolves so long as he does not revolve about himself."[3]

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[1] Erikson, "Dimensions of the New Identity," Lecture II, p. 14.

[2] Erikson, Godkin Lecture I, p. 312.

[3] Karl Marx, German Ideology, written with Fredrick Engels in 1846, ed. C. J. Arthur (New York: International Publishers, 1970), p. 58.

[4] Karl Marx: Early Writings, translated and edited by T. B. Bottomore (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 44.

He is proposing a Copernican revolution. Those symbols which man had thought to be at the center of the universe, he insists, are not actually the center. Man was under an illusion to have thought so. People who persist in thinking that such symbols are at the center of the universe are deluded, victims of "mystification."[4] Morality, religion, and ideology are, in reality, nothing more than "phantoms formed in the human brain."[5]

In place of such an "illusory sun" Marx announces what is really at the center of the universe -- "man himself." There are some passages in Marx which suggest a dynamic interaction among the various elements which shape the human experience. This is particularly evident in Marx's references to man's "species life." Those passages refer to man's social interaction with one another as members of a common species,[6] to sexual interaction,[7] and to interaction with nature.[8] Even in those instances, however, it becomes clear that the fundamental reality which is the basis for this species life is its material modes of production.[1] "Man himself," as Marx comes to describe him, is the economic man.

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[1] Ibid., p. 49.

[2] Ibid., p. 44.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Marx, German Ideology, pp. 40 and 46.

[5] Ibid., p. 46.

[6] Marx, "Alienated Labor," Karl Marx: Early Writings, p. 126.

[7] Marx, "Private Property and Labour," Karl Marx: Early Writings, p. 158.

[8] Ibid., p. 149.

All other elements in man's experience -- culture, the family, nationality, law, morality, education, science, art, religion, etc. -- are reflections of his activities in material production.[2] That material process is the basis of all history, and it is possible "to explain all the different theoretical products and forms of consciousness, religion, philosophy, ethics, etc., etc. and trace their origins and growth from that basis."[3] These are the "phantoms of the brain" mentioned earlier. They are merely "sublimates of their material life process."[4]

So Marx's Copernican revolution was designed not only to demonstrate that what man had thought was at the center of the universe of his experience was not really the center at all but also to propose a new single, central element, massive enough to provide the basis for the formation of symbols. It was, indeed, a revolution after the style of Copernicus. What the sun was for the Copernican model the material modes of production became in the Marxian model.

Sigmund Freud's project had a similar Copernican quality, although the alternate center which he proposed for the center of man's universe was quite a different one from Marx's. Ricoeur's work has made it plain that Freud's project was not as narrow and reductive as has often been assumed.[1] In addition to the multivalent quality of his explorations of the id, there are places where Freud suggests quite an active role for the ego.[2] The work of Freud, like that of Marx, is too rich to be confined to one simplistic notion.

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[1] Ibid., pp. 127, 128.

[2] Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels, The Communist Manifesto (1848), Tr. Samuel Moore (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1967), pp. 96-102; Marx, "Private Property and Communism," p. 156.

[3] Marx, German Ideology, p. 58.

[4] Ibid., p. 47.

Nevertheless, even after recognizing these qualifications, early childhood and infantile sexuality clearly occupy the central role in his model of symbolic formation.

> The beginnings of religion, ethics, society, and art meet in the Oedipus complex. . . . It is in the nature of this new contribution [the Oedipus complex] that it could play none other than the central role in [a synthesized explanation of the origins of religion, morality, and society.][3]

As Marx "explained" the origin of symbols on the basis of material production processes, Freud proposes an "explanation" on the basis of psychic processes.

Erikson's criticism of Freud is not that Freud stresses the importance of early childhood experiences, including their connections with sexuality, but that Freud assigns them such a primary, almost exclusive, role in human development. The mistake of psychoanalysis, according to Erikson, is that it has assigned such a massive, central place to infantile sexuality that this has been raised "to the rank of a cosmology."[4] "We can no longer abide by the one-way proposition which explains the behavior of leaders and of masses on the basis of the childhoods they had or had shared."[5]

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[1] Above, pp. 85-99.

[2] Sigmund Freud, "The Ego and the Id" (1923), The Standard Edition, XIX, 25.

[3] Sigmund Freud, Totem and Taboo (New York: Random House, 1918 and 1946), pp. 202-203.

[4] Erikson, YML, p. 18.

[5] Erikson, IR, pp. 201-202; the same point is evident in Erikson's interpretation of the Count Thun dream, Ibid., 195.

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The conclusion must be that while Freud is dealing with a higher complex constellation, he, like Copernicus and Marx, finds the center of that system in one powerful force around which all the other elements turn.

It is in contrast to these models that the revolutionary character of Erikson's model becomes evident. There is, he insists, no single aspect of human experience around which all the others turn:

> There is really no use in asking what comes first. The ensemble arises with its parts and the parts with the ensemble; even though each part when first revealed by a new method may impress its finder as being the cause and the beginning of all other parts.[1]

A person may begin his exploration with any one of the parts, but he will not understand the richness of the entire ensemble of a symbol if he insists that his starting point is the center of the complete ensemble. In contrast to Freud's "anatomy is destiny" and Napoleon's "history is destiny," Erikson posits that "anatomy, history, and personality are our combined destiny."[2]

This is not to say that Marx or Freud led man astray in the process of discovery. On the contrary, it was only through their creative explorations that further steps could be taken. Even now they are most helpful in clarifying some of the key elements in the full ensemble. Any model which neglects the elements which they explored so imaginatively will be inadequate for dealing with the formation of symbols.

However, to remain with Marx or Freud in an absolutist way or to hold that there is any one single key which accounts for the formation of symbols is also inadequate. The dynamics which is emerging for the formation of symbols is not based on any one element but on the continuous interaction of many, none of which holds the key to all the rest.

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[1] Erikson, IR, p. 141.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 285.

The serious problem raised by this approach to symbolic formation is that of relativity. If there is no single stable point of reference, do not symbols float off into the vast expanses of space, not related to anything?

c. The relativity of mutuality. Sooner or later the spectre of relativity emerges when mutuality is taken seriously. What is to be made of a model using such radical relativity?

i. An Einsteinian relativity. Relativity may be used to express the idea that everything is related to everything else. It would be appropriate to apply this meaning to Erikson's work.

However, Erikson means that and much more in the dynamics which he describes. Since he is not willing to accept any single dominant element at the center, he offers no solitary, solid base to serve as the foundation for configurational formation. Instead, he is convinced that "the relevance of a given item in a case history is derived from the relevance of other items to which it contributes relevance and from which, by the very fact of this contribution, it derives additional meaning."[1] Each part has its place in the ensemble by its action upon other parts and its being acted upon by those other parts. There is no one fundamental causative factor which determines the shape of the galaxy. All the parts are active and contribute to the "causation" of the configuration which emerges from their interaction. Erikson insists in describing a case history, for example, that there was no one cause but that the full range of interaction among all the processes "converged" to establish the pattern which had developed in the life of his patient.[2]

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[1] Erikson, CS, p. 45.

[2] Ibid., p. 37; Erikson, IR, p. 141.

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Erikson does not shrink from using the word relativity from time to time to express this interaction. The first chapter of his first book is entitled "Relevance and Relativity in Case History."[1] In it he calls for an understanding of human experience which includes those elements now studied by biology, psychology, and the social sciences. He wants to include the somatic process, the ego process, and the societal process.[2] An item in any one of those processes gains meaning only as it gains relevance in the other two as well. "Gradually," he says, "I hope we may find better words for such relativity in human existence."[3]

In his 1972 Godkin lectures this hope is repeated: "Somewhere, I am sure, we need an Einsteinian formula which would encompass ego and reality, inner and outer, as one process."[4]

ii. The stability of relativity. There was considerable resistance already to the Copernican revolution, and there is some question as to whether we have fully absorbed its implications yet. We have a "psychological inability not to believe that the earth is the center of the universe, no matter what we know as to where it is or isn't."[5] Erikson goes on to say that we can expect similar resistance to the vision of Einstein. It was evident among the German scientists who regarded his works as "abscheulich" (repugnant or even immoral), and it will hardly be less acceptable when applied on a broader scale to human experience. He is aware that the relativity he proposes robs man of his sense of security.

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[1] Erikson, CS, pp. 23-47.

[2] Above, pp. 166-168.

[3] Erikson, CS, p. 37; See also IYC, p. 23.

[4] Erikson, Godkin Lecture II, 137.

[5] Erikson, "Dimensions of the New Identity," II, 15 (in the lecture but not in the draft manuscript); also Ibid., I, 11.

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To speak to that resistance Erikson points out that relativity is not the same as relativism.[1] Relativism is a situation of chaos in which no man's life has any significance, morality has no points of reference, and a person's actions are dependent only on his own whimsy of the moment.

Relativity has its own "lawfulness," Erikson points out. Its laws deal with the way in which one part of the system affects other parts of the system. Similarly, the many elements interact with each other in ways that have some continuity and authenticity.

Similarly, though Erikson is not willing to allow any one element in human experience to dominate over all the others as a central and controlling factor, the action of all the elements with one another results in a stable configuration. There is a shape or a character to the configuration which emerges from the interaction -- a sense of identity, a world-image, a public vision, a ritual.[2] All of these configurations have great coherence and strength. That integrity is established by mutual interaction among a multitude of elements. They have converged to create a distinctive and powerful configuration. The reason for this is that there is not only mutual activation among the members of the system but also mutual regulation. An equilibrium is established which gives the structure its cohesive strength.

At the same time, as is befitting any configuration constituted in relativity, Erikson keeps the boundaries of the ensemble "open and fluent" rather than restrictive and confined.[3]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Erikson, ORM, p. 341.

[3] Erikson, IR, p. 92.

Human life, of course, cannot be sustained in an absolute relativism in which there are no stable points of reference. The direction in this discussion has been to explore the source and nature of that stability.

When this model is used as the basis for understanding symbols, it suggests that it is the symbols themselves which give meaning and significance to human life. They give form to the multiplicity and flux of experience. They offer sufficient coherence and strength to orient man in the world. They enable him to "make sense" of life not only in spite of the chaotic forces which threaten to undo man but even by giving shape to those very forces.

Since, then, it is symbols which give meaning to human experience, it is not possible to "explain" symbols in terms of any one powerful influence (e.g., infantile sexuality, modes of production, etc.) or to identify such a force as being the source of all symbols. Instead, every symbol is the unique combination of many elements in human experience. All of them have contributed to its formation, and the symbol is sustained by the continuing interaction of these elements among one another and of these elements with the symbol itself. It is through this web of interaction that the symbol has brought all the contributing elements into focus in this peculiar shape and can offer the necessary stability for developing and sustaining significance in human life.

Thus, in answer to the question posed by the boy at the very beginning of this dissertation I would reply that it is not a rock or an elephant that holds the world up - but a spider web! The symbol which holds man's world together (or up) is itself supported by a whole web of interacting elements or forces.

There is, however, no one symbol which holds the world up. Every symbol is relative - in two ways. First, it is related to a whole variety of elements, as was just mentioned, and draws its strength from its interaction with them. Now a second aspect of relativity is added. The symbol constitutes a unique combination of a specific set of elements. It is one among many such combinations. No one of them is "absolute." None goes "all the way down." Yet, it is the total action of all of them in the wide range of human experience which sustains the total world of human significance and orientation.

If this now stands in contrast to absolutism, it is also different from the stark relativism in Bertrand Russell's bleak imagery, which abandons man as an insignificant speck in the void of space.[1] Instead, symbols support and orient man's lives because they are grounded in a web of rich and powerful relationships. (Remember that Arabella, the spider, was, after a period of adjustment, able to spin her web even in the weightlessness of outer space!) It is that web of relationships which is explored in this study.

That does raise the next issue regarding relativity. From what perspective does a person view this process of symbolic formation when his own position, by definition, is purely relative?

iii. Relativity and perspective. Does not a person need a fixed and stable point from which to view the process he is describing?

One response to this difficult issue is to return to the galactic model. It was possible to chart the Milky Way galaxy without having such a fixed point for viewing. The earth, after all, is a minor satellite among the nine orbiting around the sun. The sun, in turn, comes off as a very

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[1] Bertrand Russell, "Dreams and Facts," Sceptical Essays (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1928), p. 30.

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small star among approximately 150 billion such stars in the Milky Way galaxy.[1] It is located 65,000 light years away from the center of that galaxy,[2] and moving around it at the rate of 140 miles per second.[3] Stars closer to the center are moving more quickly in their orbit and stars further away orbit more slowly. From the earth the stars closer to the center appear to be moving in one direction and those farther away in another direction.[4] This is similar to the way a slowly moving airplane seems to be flying backward when it is viewed from a high-powered jet moving much more quickly beside it.

It is recognized that the earth is only one point from which the galaxy can be viewed, and this is a point which is buffeted about by a combination of many forces. Yet, once the astronomer acknowledges the relativity of this position, it is possible for him to gain quite a comprehensive picture of the full galaxy.

In a manner which is entirely consistent with this model Erikson is always keenly aware of that relative position from which he approaches any subject. At the beginning of his study of Jefferson, for example, he clarifies that he approaches the subject as (1) an immigrant to America, (2) trained in the classical tradition in Germany, (3) practising his profession as a psychoanalyst, and (4) realizing that his own development of thought could have come about only in this country.[5] That is his particular stance

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[1] Isaac Asimov, The Universe: From Flat Earth to Quasar (New York: Walker and Company, 1966), p. 80.

[2] Rousseau, op. cit., p. 318.

[3] Asimov, op. cit., p. 79.

[4] Ibid., p. 77, 78.

[5] Erikson, "Dimensions of the New Identity," I, 1; similar caveats are made in an earlier study of American life, CS, p. 284.

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or viewing point. Every interpretation of his work, then, needs to take into account this specific relative position.

In the first chapter of his study of Luther, Erikson carefully outlines the base from which he is viewing the reformer. He approaches his study with the tools of the psychoanalytic tradition,[1] with some specific criticisms of that tradition,[2] with a sense of the importance of the identity crisis,[3] with a specific understanding of the role of religion,[4] and with a personal interest in dealing with problems of faith and the problem of Germany.[5]

New demands were made upon him when he chose to study a figure from oriental culture -- Mohandas Gandhi. In an essay printed in *Daedalus* a year before the study itself was published Erikson emphasizes the importance of self-analysis by the person making the observations. He must consider the stage and conditions of his own life as well as the sequence of events which brought him to this place. Equal attention needs to be given to the community in which he does his work -- both its history and its present stage of development.[6] When Erikson develops his story of Gandhi's life, he is almost at page 100 before he begins to speak of Gandhi's life in a systematic way. The entire first section is given to a careful delineation of the position of his observation of a western psychoanalyst in Ahmedabad.[1]

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[1] Erikson, YML, p. 16.

[2] *Ibid*., pp. 18, 19.

[3] *Ibid*., p. 14.

[4] *Ibid*., p. 21.

[5] *Ibid*., p. 9.

[6] Erik H. Erikson, "On the Nature of Psycho-Historical Evidence: In Search of Gandhi," *Daedalus*, XCVII (Summer, 1968), 709.

Even in his description of his basic point of reference for all these studies -- the epigenetic life cycle -- Erikson acknowledges that any description of the life cycle, whether religious or scientific or any other, depends on where the observer stands. So he proceeds carefully to establish his own "conceptual ancestry" as a way of clarifying his particular viewing point.[2]

Consistent with this call to be aware not only of one's own position in life but also of that of the community in which he participates, Erikson was continually calling the psychoanalytic community to be aware of its relative position in the world. He pointed out the temptations of psychoanalysis to expose the hypocritical disguises of every cultural expression "except those pertaining to the intellectual Bildung of which psychoanalysis was a part."[3] In a configuration of full mutuality (and, hence, of full relativity) there is no privileged position outside of the configuration which is itself exempt from the dynamic interaction. Psychoanalysis may provide some unique insights into human experience, but these insights are still made from only one perspective of the total situation. Therefore, psychoanalysis itself is under obligation to be aware of the relative nature of its own perspective.

> We cannot escape the major task of our time -- a task which we have helped to shape -- namely, that of participating in historical actuality more consciously. . . . [This requires] a clarification of our own position as observers and participants.[4]

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[1] Erikson, GT, pp. 19-93.

[2] Erikson, "The Human Life Cycle," IX, 286.

[3] Erikson, CS, p. 282.

[4] Erikson, IR, p. 211.

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There is no objective position, only "enlightened partisanship."[1] Erikson is willing to accept the consequences of his full mutuality. He acknowledges that neither his personal position nor that of the community of psychoanalysts to which he belongs is a fixed point from which to view human experience. What he, and all men, must settle for is to be as conscious as possible of the particular bias from which he views the human condition.

While he is willing to accept the full implications of a relative perspective, Erikson points to another aspect of this problem of observation -- it is possible to make observations from more than one perspective.

He takes the three processes referred to earlier (the somatic process, the ego process, and the societal process)[2] and identifies the disciplines from which they have been studied -- biology, psychology, and the social sciences.[3] Each of those perspectives has a distinctive light to bring upon a specific case history. None, not even psychoanalysis, it is to be noted , is to take priority over the others. "Wherever you begin, you will have to begin again twice over."[4] Once all has been reviewed from the biological perspective it is necessary to begin all over again, reviewing the material with a fresh look from another perspective. "Only a triple bookkeeping, or, if you wish, a systematic going around in circles, can gradually clarify the relevances and the relativities of all the known data."[5] A sense of the total configuration emerges in the interaction of one perspective with another, each heightening the insights of the other.

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Above, pp. 166-168.

[3] Erikson, CS, p. 36.

[4] Ibid., p. 45.

[5] Ibid., p. 46.

The same approach is confirmed later in Erikson's work when he is dealing with the relationship of psychoanalysis and history. He is careful to emphasize that neither the position of the historian nor that of the psychoanalyst has priority over the other in understanding a great man and his era. Each must contribute what it has to offer and expect to be informed also by the insights of the other perspective.[1]

The procedure is demonstrated in Erikson's study of Luther. Erikson devotes most of the second chapter to a description of at least five different views of Luther -- those of a Protestant professor, a Dominican priest, a psychiatrist, a psychoanalyst, and a Marxist sociologist.[2] He points to the temptation of each to "take total and unashamed possession" of Luther,[3] as if that particular perspective on the reformer were the true Luther. He points to the limitations of each approach. The theologian, Erikson points out, completely isolates the divine revelations which came to Luther from other elements in his experience. "Everything extraordinary that happens to Luther" in the view of the theologian "is befohlen, ordered from above, without advance notice or explanation and completely without intention or motivation on Luther's part."[4] The theologian uses a planetary model. There is one central element which explains everything in Luther's experience. Erikson, however, is not willing to settle for that. Other perspectives must also be taken into consideration. Thus, while no one is adequate taken by itself, each one has its contribution to make. "All these ways of viewing a great man's life may be needed to capture the mood of the historical event."[1] In this study Erikson gives a concrete demonstration of the "triangulation" procedure according to which a point is located by getting a fix on it from more than one position. Finally, it must be remembered that Erikson is aware that his own perspective is subject to the same limitations as the others in the study of Luther.[2]

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[1] Erikson, "Dimensions of the New Identity," Lecture I, 2. See note on page 165 above; Erikson, IR, p. 214.

[2] Erikson, YML, pp. 25-35.

[3] Ibid., p. 30.

[4] Ibid.

Such a "triangulation" process of observation does not destroy the insights which man has gained from past research. It does, however, call each person to recognize the limitations of his own approach, and it invites an interdisciplinary and an interperspectival dialogue if man is to have a more adequate sense of the full configuration in which he is participating.

Erikson's awareness of the relativity of the position of the analyst is so keen that he is conscious of the fact that the very act of analysis affects the process which is being studied. It is the Heisenberg principle applied to the work of the psychoanalyst. "Our conceptualizations and interpretations become part of a historically self-conscious scene, and insight and conduct influence each other with immediacy," he observes.[3] This is the ultimate realization of relativity between the analyst and his subject.

* * *

When this relativity model is applied to the formation of symbols, two things are suggested on this matter of perspective: one is a keen self-consciousness of the position from which the analyst is viewing this process, and the other is a continual interperspectival dialogue among analysts of different positions.

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[1] _Ibid._, p. 36.

[2] Above, p. 187.

[3] Erikson, IYC, p. 43.

In regard to the first suggestion there is some evidence that this is already beginning to happen in various quarters. Theology, for example, has a keen interest in the understanding of symbols. H. Richard Niebuhr has been one of the most influential theologians to insist that there is no "neutral ground" from which it is possible to examine a faith-stance. If the observer is not working within one faith perspective, then he is looking on from another one. It is a great delusion to lay claim to a "disinterested and objective" standpoint.[1]

In the field of science Michael Polanyi calls for awareness of the "tacit dimension" within which all men, including scientists, receive their experience,[2] and Thomas Kuhn invites scientists to be conscious of the paradigm which orients their research and their conclusions.[3]

It may well be, as the experience of astronomic observations suggests, that continual attention to the relativity of the position from which the process is being analyzed will in itself make the conclusions more adequate.

The second suggestion, which stresses the importance of an interperspectival dialogue, is particularly crucial in these early stages of research on the formation of symbols. This means that it is not necessary to make an absolute choice between various approaches -- between Marx and Freud, to use examples cited earlier. Each has a perspective to offer which enlarges man's understanding of the forces which shape his symbols. Neither is it necessary to choose between the "primitivism" of a man like Eliade, on the one hand, who celebrates the rich mythological sources of human experience and regrets his "fall into history,"[1] and, on the other hand, the progressive optimism of cartoonist Graysmith who is so thankful that man is finally moving out of the Ice Age into an era of rationality, as he demonstrates in Figure 5, a cartoon from the San Francisco Chronicle. Both primitive mythology and contemporary rationality have vital contributions to make to the whole picture.

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[1] H. Richard Niebuhr, The Meaning of Revelation (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941), pp. 26 and 27.

[2] Michael Polanyi, The Tacit Dimension (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1967), p. 10.

[3] Thomas Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 10.

Yet, the "whole picture" is never known, as this emphasis on the relativity of any perspective makes clear. We live in the continual expectation that new perspectives will give fresh insights and that the interaction between perspectives will bring richer understanding for both. The process of observation remains open-ended, the more so if the study itself affects what is being studied.

2. Mutual modification.

The first aspect of the text which opened this discussion[2] stressed how every element actively contributes to the others and to the total configuration. The second aspect is simply the other side of the coin - every element is itself acted upon by the others.

a. Mutual support. One of the results of being acted upon by other elements in the total configuration is that those are the forces by

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[1] Mircea Eliade, Cosmos and History, tr. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1959), p. 158.

[2] Above, p. 171.

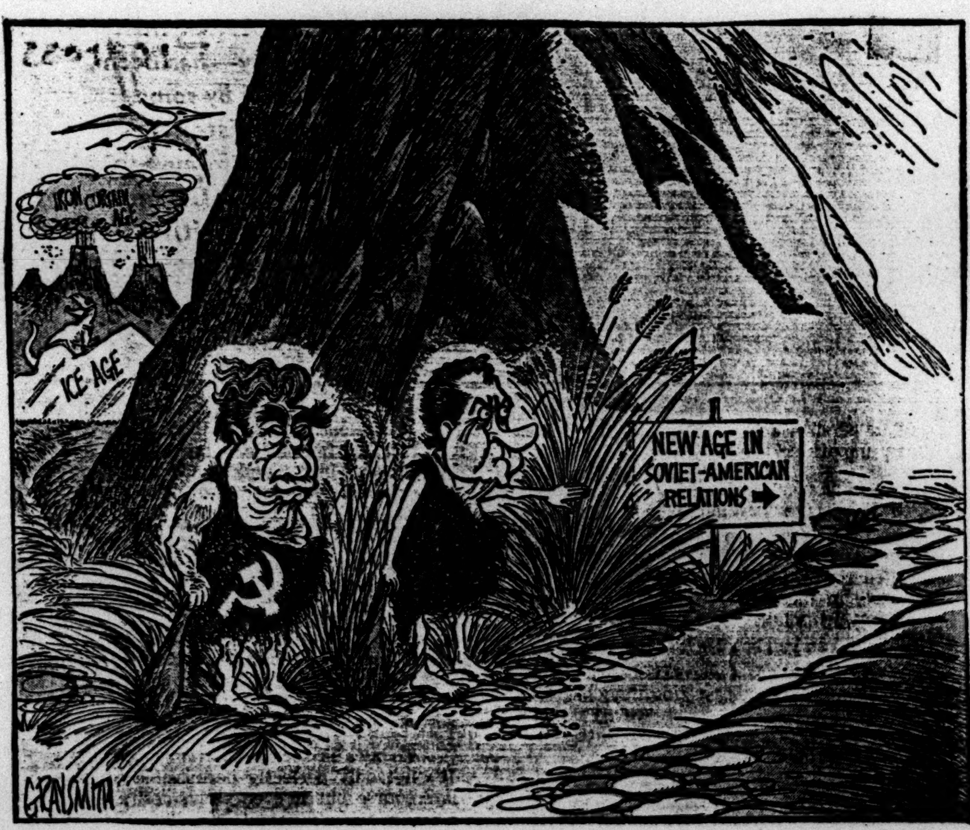
IRON CURTAIN AGE
ICE AGE
NEW AGE IN SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONS →
GRAYSMITH

FIGURE 5

Graysmith cartoon in San Francisco Chronicle which assumes superiority of the rational over more "primitive" approaches to human relations.

which each element is sustained in its position. Not only is the infant supported in the relationship with its mother, for example. The mother, too, is strengthened and confirmed through the interaction between the two.[1] "A family can bring up a baby only by being brought up by him."[2]

What begins in that earlier stage of life continues throughout his years "until a man's power of mutual affirmation wanes."[3] Similar support, with each side of the interaction receiving strength by the action of the other, occurs between youth and community,[4] between sexual partners,[5] between the individuals and the institutions of society,[6] and the hosts of other ties of mutual affirmation.[7]

Such a mutual confirmation arising out of interaction is essential for life. Without it any element in the life-support process simply withers. It is demonstrated most vividly in the interplay between persons. Ralph Ellison expressed it unforgettably in Invisible Man:

> You often doubt if you really exist. You wonder whether you aren't simply a phantom . . . . Out of resentment you begin to bump people back . . . . You ache with the need to convince yourself that you do exist in the real world, that you're a part of all the sound and anguish, and you strike out with your fists, you curse and you swear to make them recognize you.[8]

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[1] Erikson, IR, p. 231; Godkin Lectures, I, 304.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 96; also CS 69.

[3] Erikson, IYC, p. 23.

[4] Ibid., p. 241.

[5] Erikson, CS, p. 265.

[6] Erikson, IR, pp. 155-156; IYC, p. 141.

[7] Erikson also uses such phrases as "mutual verification" and "mutual certification" to express this sense of mutual support. (See his IR, p. 170, and ORM, p. 338.)

[8] Ralph Ellison, Invisible Man (New York: Random House - Vintage Books, 1972), p. 3.

Erikson makes the same point with less literary flair but more clinicly by observing that rage and anxiety and, above all, "deadness" settle in where there is a lack of interplay.[1] The absence of significant interaction will finally extinguish a child's expectations so that he will no longer seek for the impressions that verify his feelings.[2] Just as mutual affirmation sustains persons in their interaction, so it sustains all the elements involved in the interplay by which symbols are shaped.

b. Mutual adaptation. However, such mutual support is not the only quality experienced by elements of the configuration as they are being acted upon. Those same forces of interplay also effect changes in the elements on which they act. Nothing which enters such an arena of interaction will come out the same as it entered its sphere of influence.

An important test of whether or not a model offers genuine mutuality is whether it is possible for any element within that model to act upon other elements in the model without itself being changed in the process. In the case of classical psychoanalysis the critical test would need to be made with regard to the libidinal forces, especially sexuality.[3] Erikson, however, makes it clear that sexuality does not enter the arena as the all-powerful actor compelling everything else to make way for it. Sexuality, too, is modified by the interaction in which it is involved. Even in a society which is more permissive sexuality takes on a particular style.[4]

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[1] Godkin Lectures, I, 307.

[2] Erikson, ORM, p. 338.

[3] Because Erikson works out of this tradition, considerable attention was given to this problem in the last chapter already. See p. 182.

[4] Erikson, IYC, p. 242.

Sexuality never participates in shaping a configuration without being modified, adapted, or stylized itself in the process. One illustration of this is portrayed by Lawrence Durell in Justine, the first novel of his Alexandrian quartet. Darley, the central character, is involved in a sexual affair with the magnificent Justine. It is getting to the point where it is more than he can handle. He wants to get some perspective on the whole business. It occurs to him that if he could only get to the fundamental reality of the sexual act he might find his way through it all. So he decides that in order to come upon "the act in its natural state, . . . undamaged by the idea" he would go to the booth of one of the prostitutes in the native quarter. He invades the booth, finding it difficult to explain to the prostitute and her customer, locked in a sexual embrace, "that I was investigating nothing more particular than the act upon which they were engaged."[1] Darley discovers that it is impossible to discover such a thing as unadorned, "natural" sexuality. In this booth, too, sexuality has been modified to one specific style, shaped by the persons involved and by the environment, even by his own presence. Everything, even sexuality, is changed by everything else. (This is one prominent theme in the entire quartet, both in the style of interaction among the characters and also in the way that it is written, first from one perspective and then from another.)

Every part in the ensemble is subject to the same kind of modification. The tradition of a culture comes into a person's experience with considerable stability, and Erikson regards this as an important element in the shaping of an individual's identity. Nevertheless, even this massive body is subject to change by its interaction with the adolescent people within its culture.[1] In fact, if the tradition is not subject to modification or adaptation, it will not adequately serve its members[2] and may not even survive.[3]

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[1] Lawrence Durell, Justine (New York: Pocket Books, 1961), p. 167.

Also in the relationship between the client and his therapist it is not only the client who is subject to change. The therapist, too, emerges from the encounter different from the way he entered.[4] Any healthy engagement of nation with nation will mean that both are modified in the process.[5] Mutual activation between any set of elements calls for a genuine and creative adaptation of all the elements in the configuration with the possibility of being renewed in the process.[6]

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This matter of adaptation is particularly important in the total process by which symbols are formed. There is, after all, a multitude of symbols in the world. A list of static elements arranged in a variety of ways could never be adequate to account for such diversity. However, a dynamic which indicates that the elements involved in the process are themselves changed by the interaction in ways that are unique for that particular interchange offers the possibility of infinite variety.

Every element which enters into this interaction is vulnerable to change. There is no guarantee of exactly how it will emerge from the pro-

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[1] Erikson, IR, p. 126.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 222.

[3] Erikson, IR, p. 126.

[4] _Ibid._, p. 236.

[5] Erikson, IR, pp. 241-243.

[6] Erikson, IYC, p. 318.

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cess of mutual activation. This dynamic is comparable to the risk which Martin Buber describes in the I-Thou encounter.[1] The interaction calls for more than a mere adjustment to make the situation tolerable. Such adjustment would be a defensive reaction in which that party to the encounter attempts to remain in control of the interaction and its affect on him. Involvement in an I-Thou encounter leaves the future quite open and unpredictable for every segment which participates.

This is also the case for the symbols which are formed, as will be indicated in detail in Chapter VIII. The "completed" symbol, it will be remembered, never graduates out of the process. It becomes involved in the dynamics by which still other symbols are formed. In that process it shares the vulnerability of all the elements.

Religious symbols are a case in point. As Herbert Richardson points out, there is no "general sense of wholeness, rightness, and well-being," which are the basic qualities of religion in his description. Every religion and every religious experience, as a result of its interaction with all the other elements in the situation, takes on a distinctive style.[2] There is no plain, "unadulterated" religious symbol exempt from all other influence any more than there is such a sexuality. Even Tillich's "ground of being" would have a strange ring among members of the Tasaday tribe. Erikson, incidentally, confirms this in his study of Luther, pointing out that there is no divine call, no religious expression, which is isolated from the individual's personal history and the historical actualities in which he participates.[3]

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[1] Martin Buber, I and Thou, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970), p. 60.

[2] Richardson, Toward an American Theology, p. 64.

[3] Erikson, YML, p. 30.

This dynamic of mutual adaptation offers the possibility of continual renewal and of creative change. It also requires risk. Only he who is willing to run the risk of losing his life has the possibility of finding it. The recognition of that dynamic in symbolic formation did not begin in the twentieth century. Not everyone jumped at the opportunity to run such a risk in the first century, and the resistance to adaptation remains part of today's world as well.

c. Resistance to adaptation. This vulnerability is probably what lies at the root of the resistance to relativity described earlier.[1] The most specific demonstration of this resistance described by Erikson comes in his concept of "pseudo-speciation."[2]

This is the attitude of any tribe or clan or nation that its particular style of life is the norm for genuine humanity. It was created in the very center of the universe.[3] It is sustained by an accepted mythology, and given a unique location in history.[4] It receives its sanction from God, in whose mind it was devised,[5] and by whose will it has been appointed a chosen and elect people.[6] The basis for all of this is rooted in the fact that man is not a "natural" species whose decisions and actions are dictated by instinctive behavioral patterns but a creature who must come to a sense of being a specific kind of man -- one with an individual and a collective identity.[7] Its most flagrant form came in Hitler's National

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[1] Above, p. 182.

[2] Erikson, "Dimensions of the New Identity," I, 8.

[3] Erikson, "Insight and Freedom," p. 7.

[4] Erikson, IYC, p. 299.

[5] Ibid., p. 298.

[6] Erikson, Godkin Lectures, I, 373.

[7] Erikson, IYC, pp. 235 and 240; also see p. 341.

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Socialism.[1] In its more subtle form it assumes that one group of people has the responsibility for granting to others their membership in a full humanity.[2]

Erikson returns to this theme frequently in his latest work, often to remind his readers of how such a mentality threatens to destroy the species and to emphasize the importance of a sense of "specieshood." However, in the context of this consideration of full mutuality it also serves as an example of the extent of the resistance to such mutuality and the nature of that resistance.

This location in the center of the universe and the sense that any change or adaptation would be a deteriorization of its true humanity is characteristic of the defensive stance, unwilling to risk the vulnerability involved in full participation in the interaction among men.

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Symbols serve the crucial function of offering to man that distinctive sense of his individual and collective identity which he requires. As a result, of course, they have also been used as the primary tools for perpetuating the pseudo-species syndrome. Their resistance to adaptation must be taken seriously in the total dynamics. It is exactly this dilemma between the important form-giving function of symbols and the temptation inherent in that function toward totalism which is the center of attention in Chapter VIII.

d. Mutual regulation. Erikson offers an alternative to such a rigid and brittle attempt at preserving stability -- mutual regulation.

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[1] Erikson, GT, p. 432.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 316.

Out of the very interaction which often seems so threatening develops a configuration. "Psychosocial strength," says Erikson, "depends on a total process which regulates individual life cycles, the sequence of generations, and the structure of society simultaneously for all have evolved together."[1] The mother and child, for example, each modify the other in significant ways. It is through that serious interplay with all the risk and adaptation that it requires that each comes to understand himself with reference to the other and to respond to the changing position of the other.[2] In that process a mutual regulation has developed. The same type of dynamic equilibrium occurs in that stage when the child is moving toward a sense of his own independence and this interacts with the parental concern for his protection and guidance.[3] It is found in the interaction between the individual and the social institutions in which he participates.[4] However, the supreme example of mutual regulation is in the sexual orgasm achieved between man and woman.[5]

> [It] appeases the hostilities and the potential rages caused by the daily oppositeness of male and female, of love and hate, of work and play. Such experience makes sexuality less obsessive and sadistic control of the partner superfluous.[6]

This exemplifies how mutual regulation is an alternative to control and invincibility. Perhaps not so much a settledness as a dynamic equilibrium maintained in on-going interaction is what characterizes the quality of this mutual relation.

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[1] Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis, p. 141.

[2] Erikson, CS, p. 247.

[3] Ibid., p. 82.

[4] Ibid., p. 256.

[5] Ibid., p. 265.

[6] Erikson, IYC, p. 137.

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Such a mutual regulation functions on all levels of symbolic activity. It operates in the interaction between the elements which give shape to a symbol, between those elements and the formed symbol, and between symbolic configurations and the people who discover their oriention with reference to them.

The person involved in such interplay finds himself supported and also changed in this process. He is sustained by it and yet allowed the necessary leeway so as not to be locked in by it. A healthy tradition is a symbolic configuration within which such mutual regulation "between body and mind, adult and child, individual and culture" continues its dynamic interaction.[1] A sound religious tradition, then, is not only one constituted by a lively interaction among the many dimensions of human experience but also one within which continual interplay among the various elements of human life can enjoy this mutual regulation.

The dynamic of mutual regulation suggested by Erikson's model raises once again the question of whether a sufficient basis for the cohesive strength of symbols is provided by this model. When the symbols which hold a person's life together are recognized in terms of such radical relativity, is the strength of mutual regulation great enough to give man the sense of rootedness which seems to be important for effective living? Even though Erikson grounds the interaction in such primordial organic processes as bodily-instinctual modes, epigenetic stages, mythologies and visions, rituals and dreams, virtues and patterns of play, and man's faith and his

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[1] Erik H. Erikson, "Problems of Infancy and Early Childhood," An Outline of Abnormal Psychology, ed. Garner Murphy and Arthur J. Bachrach (New York: The Modern Library, 1954), p. 25.

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autonomy, is not the whole model of mutual activation which holds them together too precarious for the serious business of making sense of life? Does the symbolic reality constituted by mutual activation give a man something great enough to live for and to die in? Is it not likely that the notion of full mutuality is one more exercise by liberal intellectuals, one fostered by the ritual of writing dissertations, and one doomed to the fate of other towers of Babel?

Of course, no answer to those disturbing questions is yet available. Some tentative responses may indicate that the project is still worth pursuing. First, the interaction is among those elemental dimensions of human experiences with which Erikson deals. Intellectual games and fantasies are not left out of the dynamics but neither are they the center of the process or the glue which holds it together. The symbolic configuration which emerges from the interaction is still prior to reflective thought, as Ricoeur pointed out.

Second, the broad range of sources which interact with one another actually broadens the base from which symbols draw their power. To indicate that religious symbols, for example, are constituted not by subjective intuition by itself or by arbitrary divine intervention entirely isolated from everything else that happens to a person or community (_deus ex machina_) but that they emerge from a complex interaction of all the elements in a person's life (not excluding intuition or revelation, as the next chapter indicates) is not to destroy the roots of faith but to enrich the soil in which they grow.

Third, the realistic situation which must somehow be interpreted is that there are many diverse ways of "being human" in this world. There are varieties of religion, of culture, and of tradition. Each of them has some sense of wholeness and well-being about that way of living and believing. The model of mutual activation opens one possibility for understanding how such diversity exists and even suggests that it may be possible to respect the integrity of other symbolic configurations and still affirm one's own as being authentic and powerful, worth living for and dying in.

Fourth, every step of self-consciousness in the human odyssey has met with the same fears and resistances. They are to be taken seriously, of course, and must themselves participate in the interaction. It is to be expected that such revolutions take some time to seep into the consciousness of human experience. The scientific revolution is still in its adolescence. The Freudian revolution, though younger, is probably somewhat further along, and the Marxist revolution has just begun to touch the fringes of this society. The acceptance of the dynamics of mutual activation (relativity) is not likely to prove less traumatic than the others. There is some encouragement in the long-range response to Copernicus and Shapley.

3. Mutual energizing

The third aspect of mutual activation proposed by the "text" being used for its exposition[1] is that the elements, as they act upon one another and are in turn acted upon, evoke energy out of one another in the process. The text uses the word "inspire:" "Within [a network of mutual influences] the person is 'inspired with active properties,' even as he so inspires others."[2] This sense of causing something else to become active is, of course, the meaning of the word "activation," and it has been necessary to exercise some restraint to limit the discussion of that concept to a reduced sense of the term, as though it meant simply "to act upon."

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[1] Above, p. 171.

[2] Erikson, IR, p. 165.

One of the primary definitions of "to inspire" as given by Webster is: "to exert an animating, enlivening, or exalting influence upon." A new level of dynamics is suggested by this language. One body involved in this process acts upon another body so as to evoke or trigger or seed or call forth from that other body a new life and energy which it has not displayed before.

What Erikson suggests is that new energy is generated during the process of interaction.

a. Models of physical energy. The details of exactly how this happens are not worked out by Erikson in any systematic way. In fact, at one point he confesses that we simply do not yet understand the dynamics of such activation. Nevertheless, a careful gleaning of his work reveals that he uses four different ways to describe what is happening, all of which can be interpreted after the model of physical energy.

He offers (1) a simple statement of reciprocity. As one body in the process activates other bodies, it, in turn, finds itself activated.[1] "Give, and it shall be given unto you," the Scriptures say, and St. Francis echoes that in his famous prayer: "It is in giving that we receive."[2] A Shakespearean quotation from Troilus and Cressida supports such mutual activation:

> [man] . . . feels not what he owns, but by reflection
> As when his virtues shining upon others
> Heat them, and they retort that heat again
> to the first giver.[3]

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 219.

[2] Erikson, IR, p. 232.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 166.

Erikson states it most strongly in yet another reference: "A healthy person must have enough vitality to give a surplus to others, so that he may receive it back multiplied."[1] As one person in a configuration acts upon the other people involved, he himself receives back from them a renewed activation for his own life. A new level of energy has developed in the process of the interaction. It is as though sound waves have gone out, and, as they have been reflected back, as they would from a sounding board, their strength has been amplified.

In one passage Erikson suggests a slightly different version of the way in which this energy is developed: "The doer is activated in whatever strength is appropriate. . . even as he activates in the other the strength appropriate to [him]."[2] This at least hints that even before any feedback is received from the other person in terms of supportive vibrations the doer received new strength just because he acted in the first place. It seems to be (2) the principle of gaining strength by exercise.

Both of these references have been concerned with how the actor himself is activated to higher levels of energy. More significant than this self-activation, of course, is the way that one body activates another. The two types of such activation draw their imagery again from the world of physics: one is when potential energy which had been held in reserve by a body is released because it has been acted upon by another, and the other type is when new potential energy is made available to one body because it was encountered by another.

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[1] Interagency Conference on Healthy Personality Development in Children, Healthy Personality Development in Children (New York: The Josiah Macy, Jr., Foundation, 1952), p. 84.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 233.

According to the first of these, every element in the process holds potential energy within itself which remains dormant if it is left to itself. (3) The release of this potential energy is made possible when that element is encountered by another element. Erikson uses such language in describing the mutual activation of sexuality and love: "A partner's potency and potentialities are activated even as he activates the other's potency and potentialities."[1] This release of potential energy is probably the most usual way for Erikson to describe the dynamics of activation.

The most interesting aspect of activation, and possibly an original one, is (4) that new potential energy is made available to each of the elements involved in symbolic formation by their interaction with one another.

> The mutual complementation of group identity and ego identity, of ethos and ego, puts a greater energy potential at the disposal of both ego synthesis and social organization.[2]
>
> A more inclusive identity is a development by which two groups . . . join their identities in such a way that new potentials are activated in both.[3]

In both of these instances, which describe a rise in energy potential, that rise occurs in both of the elements involved in the interaction. One does not lose its own energy potential and make it available to the other. Both emerge from the encounter with a greater potential -- both ego and society, in the first instance, and both groups (nations, according to the context), in the second.

That this description of activation requires a new mode of understanding is quite clear to Erikson. It is quite a deliberate departure. He is aware that this means that the creative way in which Freud used the analogy of physical energy to speak of instinctual energy must itself now be transcended.[1]

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[1] Erikson, IR, p. 234.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 50.

[3] *Ibid.*, 315 and 316.

* * *

It will be helpful to step outside Erikson's work momentarily to gain some perspective on its implications for the formation of symbols in comparison to other proposals. Freud's proposal could be compared to a hydraulic model. According to this, a great reservoir of potential energy is available to the human organism. If not properly controlled, it can wreck great havoc, spilling out in very destructive ways. Oppressive control, on the other hand, may serve only to increase the potential destructive pressure. When properly channeled (in rational and scientific ways rather than by religious symbols)[2] this reservoir of energy may hold great promise.

Quite a different approach is used by Cassirer, who suggests an electro-magnetic model by his proposal of two poles of energy interacting with each other. The two poles are already announced in the title of the essay in which he treats the problem: "'Spirit' and 'Life' in Contemporary Philosophy."[3] "Life" is a more physical and biological type of energy which acts in the outside world. "Spirit" is the energy which acts upon the outside world. "Spirit" is the energy which pulls things together to make sense of them, to give them a form. It is Cassirer's own symbolic formation. The first he calls "efficient energy," the second is called "formative energy." Each draws from its own wells of energy. One is not dependent upon the other. When Cassirer describes their interaction with one another and the forces of attraction and repulsion involved, the image is for all the world that of a generator in which energy is developed by the intersection of the fields of force created by the two poles.[1] In some ways this model offers more possibilities for Erikson's break beyond Freud. However, Erikson would be quite uncomfortable with the sharp distinction between the two poles.

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 50.

[2] Freud, The Future of an Illusion, pp. 98 and 99.

[3] Cassirer, "'Spirit' and 'Life in Contemporary Philosophy," pp. 857-884.

Still a third model of physical energy does not depend upon such a polar division. It is the model of nuclear reactor energy, made possible by Einstein's theory of the interchangeability of mass and energy. According to this model when a mass of sufficient size (critical mass) of U^{235} atoms is brought together a neuton penetrates a U^{235} nucleus, breaking open the nucleus and releasing tremendous energy. As the nucleus splits, two or three neutrons are released, and they, in turn, strike still other nuclei, setting off a chain reaction. Each U^{235} nucleus has such energy stored in its mass, but only as it is acted on by another body is that nucleus activated and the energy released. A comparatively small amount of energy was applied to it from the outside to provoke the release of tremendous energy.[2]

This model suggests that energy is generated in the process of interaction of the various parts of the system. Energy not available at the beginning is released from within the parts, being made available by the interaction itself. The chain reaction describes how the movement is sustained.

When applied to the formation of symbols, this model proposes that the formation of a symbol not only controls energy but also releases new sources of energy. This is more in keeping with the "multiplication of energies," as Erikson describes the process in contrast to Freud's economic point of view.

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[1] Ibid., p. 870.

[2] Arthur Beiser, The Mainstream of Physics (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1962), pp. 423 and 424.

Einstein's theory of the interchangeability of mass and energy suggests still another implication for symbolic formation. Symbols, when understood as cultural objects, would probably generally be regarded as more analogous to mass than to energy. However, in the light of the web of interaction through which symbols are formed, according to an earlier section of this chapter,[1] and in anticipation of the "recognition" quality of this interaction to be presented at the end of this chapter, it is not at all out of place to suggest that a symbolic formation could be regarded as a particular structure of energy in some ways just as it may be understood as an object in others. The interchangeability of the two, viewing a symbol at some times as an object and at other times as energy, has the advantage of keeping the symbol integrally tied to the vital sources of life while still respecting the integrity of its distinctive shape.

b. The model of personal recognition. More promising than such mechanistic analogies, however, is another model suggested by Erikson. As was mentioned earlier in this chapter[2] the dynamics which Erikson often describes in terms of interpersonal relationships can be especially illuminating for understanding the interaction between less personal elements in an action system. This is a reversal of the familiar pattern of using more mechanical models to understand interpersonal relationships.

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[1] Above, pp. 203-205

[2] Above, p. 162.

Erikson frequently refers to the "mutual recognition" which occurs in the relationships between people. This is the capacity of one person to evoke a spark of light, a feeling of being more alive, a sense of being somebody in the life of another person. Usually, perhaps, it is a reciprocal event in which both of the people involved experience a "mutual heightening" of personal well-being and vitality as a result of such recognition. This dynamic of personal interaction will serve as a particularly penetrating model for an understanding of the "mechanism" of the interaction among the many elements as they contribute to the formation of a symbol.

One striking instance of "recognition" is lifted by Erikson from an intimate conversation among a small group of psychoanalysts.

> Anna Freud made the observation that children who come to feel loved become more beautiful. Does libido, then, so the discussants wondered half-humorously, 'jump' from one person to another? At any rate, our theory of inner psychic economy does not tell us what energy transforms the whole appearance of a person and heightens, as it were his tonus of living.[1]

The same impatience with Freud's energy model that was mentioned earlier is evident also here. The answer to the problem seems to lie in the posing of it. In the interaction between persons the loving approach of one person toward another evokes new vitality in the one who is addressed.

That is demonstrated in a story that carries both humor and insight. A little boy came to the restaurant with his mother and his older sister. The waitress came to their table to take the orders. First, she took the mother's order; then, big sister's. Finally, she turned to the other customer at the table, saying, "And now, little boy, what would you like to have?" Mother suggested that the blue plate special might be good for him. But the waitress ignored the mother's proposal and repeated her question to the boy. Next, his big sister volunteered that he would be having a salad, but the waitress also passed by her idea and once more repeated her request to the young lad. By now he knew that she seriously wanted to know what he himself would choose, so he squared his shoulders and burst out with "A hamburger!" The waitress recorded the order and then asked, "And what do you want on it?" There was no hesitation this time: "The works!" As the waitress returned to the kitchen to place the orders, the young man turned to his mother, beaming, and said, "Gee, mom, she thinks I'm real!"[1]

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[1] Erikson, IR, p. 162.

The recognition which the waitress gave to her little customer evoked in him a sense of being alive. How can that spark be reduced to mechanistic models? Yet, it must be incorporated because it is the mysterious magic by which a person's full humanity is constituted. Every person bears in his memory the lift that came to him when he was "recognized," in any one of a thousand ways, from the lifted eyebrow of someone important to him from across the room at a cocktail party to a formal ceremony in which his life was given special attention.

Erikson returns to this point in his Godkin lectures. As mentioned earlier, these lectures were centered on seeing, on having a vision to hold the life of a people together. When he is describing one such vision, a Flemish painting of the Annunciation, Erikson drops the notion that it is important not only to have such a vision, to see, but also "To be seen is something we need. . . . It will have to appease our dread of being nobody by the promise that at the end we will come face to face with the divine image even as we once faced the maternal one."[1] Mutual recognition is the dynamic which evokes new life in man from the beginning of his life to the day of his glorification.[2]

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[1] Earl A. Loomis, Jr., The Self in Pilgrimage (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1960), pp. 56 and 57.

i. Person-to-person instances of such mutual recognition are the primary point of reference in understanding the dynamic. Erikson offers a number of examples.

"Recognition" begins, as was indicated, in the relationship between mother and child. Each evokes vitality in the life of the other in a dynamic of heightening reciprocity. "While the baby initially smiles at a mere configuration resembling the human face, the adult cannot help smiling back, filled with expectations of a 'recognition' which he needs to secure from the new being as surely as it needs him."[3] One level of activation calls forth still another level. New expectations are evoked, new images awakened.

The sexual relationship is helpful also in this understanding of mutual activation by mutual recognition. A man's sense of his own masculinity is not a self-generated insight. Certainly the society in which he grows up contributes generously to his feeling of his own virility. Yet, that only provides the context for a heightened sense of being a man which is evoked in an intimate relationship with a woman who recognizes him as a man for her. Surely the physical dimensions of that relationship are important. However, they are also transcended so that any attempt to define masculinity in anatomical terms would be regarded by him as entirely inadequate. It is in mutual recognition that a man comes into his full masculinity and a woman into her full femininity in a spiraling ascendancy of mutuality.[1]

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[1] Erikson, Godkin Lectures, II, 93.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 23; Godkin Lectures, I, 302-305.

[3] Erikson, IR, p. 231.

That creative interaction between persons which evokes new images of masculinity and femininity and supports men in them has its parallel in the mutual activation experienced by charismatic men through whom important symbols were formed and ushered into history. Freud will serve as one instance. In his relationship with his confidant, Dr. Fliess, the stimulation was not only what he was able to give but also what he had received as new insights took shape in his thinking.[2] Luther had known it in the relationship with his father-confessor, Staupitz, who evoked new possibilities, new resources of identity, and new resolutions to Luther's melancholy, and without whom there may never have been the Reformer Luther.[3] For Gandhi it was Ambalal, who activated new sources of power and insight within the Mahatma -- not as a disciple, but as a "counter-player," serving sometimes as generous supporter and sometimes as vigorous opponent but always as his own man in lively interaction with the great experimenter.[4] Thus, even those charismatic men who were the innovators of their ages were not only activating others but were themselves activated by intimate relationships in which they were recognized as human beings.

All of these serve as specific instances of the crucial role of person-to-person relationships in "inspiring each other's images."[5] That

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[1] Erikson, IR, p. 234.

[2] Ibid., pp. 35, 37, and 236.

[3] Erikson, YML, p. 166.

[4] Erikson, GT, pp. 297-299.

[5] Erikson, "Dimensions of the New Identity," I, 12.

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phrase is a helpful one for understanding the dynamics by which symbols are formed. What has emerged is a chain-reaction type of interplay. One person or element in the configuration activates another, evoking new possibilities for his life and imagination. This, in turn, strikes a spark of possibility in still another participant in the process. The "great men" make awesome contributions in making it possible for others to imagine new possibilities and to take action, but they themselves are also "inspired" in the rising spiral of mutual recognition which evokes new images.

What is evident in the first crucial relationship, in the most intensive of human relationships, and in the most creative relationships is likewise to be found in every significant human interaction. It is, declares Erikson, "the secret of love."[1]

ii. Such person-to-person activation is used by Erikson as a model of what also happens within a person. As he interprets dream, for example, he demonstrates how a person's present situation, his cultural images, and his childhood experiences all interact with one another in a dream. In the process they amplify one another. In unfolding Freud's dream of The Three Fates, Erikson shows how the immediate situation (Freud going to bed without having had a chance to eat dinner) was the occasion for the dream. When he retold the dream later, he was able to identify no less than three childhood associations which had been touched on during the first part of the dream alone. These elements of Freud's past, which had been lying dormant, were once again called to life. They were drawn on as an important resource in gaining strength and perspective on what needed resolving in his contemporary life. Also drawn into the associations of the dream were the cultural images of education, brought to life with new vitality. Also in the dream-event were some disappointing medical experiments conducted by Freud early in his practice. Each of these elements in Freud's own life is activated during the course of the dream. It takes on new vitality and offers fresh insight. Through it all the life-situation at the time of the dream, which is also a part of the configuration, has new possibilities evoked for its resolution. Erikson calls this "an enhanced ability to find in adult actuality the resources of competence and tradition."[1] The dynamics which formed this dream configuration were a chain reaction of one element activating another, each having fresh life evoked from it, until out of this mutual activation emerged a Gestalt, a configuration which could serve to orient the dreamer in his waking, actual world.

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 219.

[2] Ibid., p. 141; Erikson, IR, p. 155.

iii. The same dynamic is applied not only in the microcosmic or Inner world but also in the individual's relation to the macrocosmic or Outer world. A mutual recognition can happen between the person and the society in which he lives, giving new vitality to both:

> Society recognizes the young individual as a bearer of fresh energy, and the individual so confirmed recognizes society as a living process which inspires loyalty as it receives it, maintains allegiance as it attracts it, honors confidence as it demands it.[2]

The individual and the society need to evoke cooperative responses from each other,[3] and as they do "a higher energy potential is at the disposal of both."[4] There is, consequently, a mutual activation between the virtues of individuals and the strength of institutions.[5] Erikson's personal

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[1] Erikson, IR, p. 184.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 241.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 176.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 141; Erikson, IR, p. 155.

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experience offers still another instance of the inspiring interaction between an individual and society. He describes how the development of his creative image of identity could have developed only in the United States.[1]

Finally, instances of the same quality of interaction are assigned by Erikson on the grand scale of encounters between large groups of people -- nation interacting with nation,[2] race with race,[3] and generation with generation.[4] While Erikson never loses sight of his hope that the human species may some day identify itself as one, he also recognizes realistically the dangers of forcing that too quickly or too superficially.[5] Therefore, he supports that quality of mutual recognition which respects "uniqueness within historical differences" between groups of people with each activating the other and strengthening one another, each in his historical development, in anticipation of a "common future identity."[6]

* * *

When this model is applied to the way in which symbols are formed, it becomes clear that such formation is based on more than the mere proximity of a number of causal elements. A symbol is likely to take shape only when the various elements involved interact with one another in a way in which they stimulate one another to higher levels of energy. This model provides some insight into how that stimulation or inspiration takes place.

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[1] Erikson, "Dimensions of the New Identity," I, 1; Erikson, "Autobiographical Notes on the Identity Crisis," p. 748.

[2] Erikson, IR, pp. 241, 242.

[3] Erikson, IYC, pp. 315, 316.

[4] _Ibid._, pp. 223, 224.

[5] _Ibid._, p. 316.

[6] Erikson, IR, p. 242; See also IYC, p. 40.

In a manner similar to the way that the mutual recognition of the mother and the child or the man and the woman evoke new possibilities and energies in one another the various elements which contribute to the formation of a symbol energize one another. One element calls forth a spark of recognition partly because it touches and affirms something vital in the other and partly because its own presence offers new and interesting possibilities for the other.

The same mutual recognition characterizes the dynamic of interaction between the formed symbol and the various elements which have been involved in its development. The symbol takes its peculiar shape because it has the capacity to spark new levels of energy in the elements with which it interacts. Vital symbols do not dominate or repress those elements but open new possibilities and new interest and new energy to them. It is only as symbols atrophy and lose their capacity to evoke new life by their touch of recognition that they become restrictive.

This model offers a quality of interaction which is important for understanding the stability of a symbol, a problem which was discussed earlier. If the strength of a symbol is based on a series of interactions in which the various elements in the process are bound together by mutual recognition, then the stability of the symbol formed from that interaction is not rigid but dynamic. It has the stability of a family rather than the stability of a fortress. The symbol, then, is rich and vibrant rather than static and unbending.

Such a network of interplay, sparked by a mutual stimulation and heightening of energy, is the quality of the dynamics by which symbols are formed. It provides a sufficiently rich milieu to account for the capacity of symbols to give significance to human life and to orient man in the world.

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In addition, this model also helps to account for the wide range of symbols which function in human experience. The "knight" and "castle" are symbols for Wartburg College. They evoke a certain level of recognition and response and serve an important function in giving identity to the college community. Yet, they do not evoke as strong a response as the American flag or the name of Christ.

It may be argued, of course, that the knight and the castle are not symbols at all. However, it is probably more helpful to acknowledge that there is a wide range of symbols than to limit symbolic action to a narrow group of images.

Symbols with a more limited range of influence are likely to have a lower level of multivalence and to evoke weaker responses of recognition. The sparks which they strike as they touch various elements in human experience are less volatile. Less energy is generated in the interaction on these lower levels of recognition.

Other symbols touch deeper dimensions of life. The recognition they evoke is more powerful, the valence more binding. They also touch a wider range of elements in their orbit of interaction. They function in a wider sphere of influence. Those symbols which evoke strong responses of recognition and which touch a greater diversity of life's elements have greater integrative power and will function in more inclusive levels of experience. Religious symbols, for example, require this high level of symbolic functioning if they are to be effective.

SUMMARY

In summary, one major dynamic in the process by which symbols are formed is that of mutual activation among the many elements which contribute to the process.

According to this dynamic all of the elements make an active contribution with no one element predominating. This suggests a galactic model of many stars interacting with one another to form the configuration of the galaxy in contrast to a planetary model which has one large body at the center of the planetary system. It also calls for an "Einsteinian model of relativity" in which the significance and stability of the symbol is established by this web of interaction rather than by a solid base.

As all elements in the system actively participate, so all of them are also acted upon. They are, therefore, vulnerable, subject to the risk of being changed. However, even as it changes them, the interaction also offers the possibility of a mutual regulation among the elements.

Finally, the elements act upon each other in such a way as to evoke new life and energy from one another. Energy is generated in the process of the symbol's formation. As one element interacts with another, it stirs the other, arousing energy which was latent within it but which needed the interaction to release it. That mutual activation is best understood in terms of the interpersonal experience of "recognition." When one person "recognizes" another, new strength and new possibilities are stirred with him. New life is called forth. This type of dynamic keeps the symbol in close touch with the vital energies of life.

CHAPTER VII

TRANSFORMATIONAL EMERGENCE

Prologue. Identity as the Model of the Crisis

1. Epigenesis as model

The galactic model was taken from the physical sciences. It has not been used by Erikson, and so it was necessary to carefully delineate its appropriateness for Erikson's work. Epigenesis, the model to be used for transformational emergence, is from the biological sciences and is the fundamental model used by Erikson throughout his work in portraying the dynamics of identity formation.

The epigenetic model comes from research in embryology. Erikson refers to C. H. Stockard's The Physical Basis of Personality.[1] It is based on the observation that the various organs of the body appear according to a regular sequence. Each organ has its own time of "ascendancy," the time when it emerges and takes shape as a part of the body. If one organ fails to develop at the appropriate time, it will remain dormant, and the entire organism will be crippled to that extent. Evidently, a genetic code establishes the pattern according to which the body unfolds.[2]

Drawing on this model Erikson proposed a series of eight separate stages in man's life cycle. They were first charted by him in Childhood and Society[1] and have served as the basis for all his subsequent work. His earlier work had used the framework of Freud's three childhood stages -- the oral, the anal, and the infantile sexual.[2] These three remain basically in tact as the first stages in the enlarged pattern of epigenetic development.

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[1] C. H. Stockard, The Physical Basis of Personality (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1931).

[2] Erik H. Erikson, "Problems of Infancy and Early Childhood," in The Cyclopedia of Medicine, Surgery and Specialties (Philadelphia: Davis and Company, 1940), p. 715; CS, p. 65; IYC, p. 93.

2. The stages of epigenesis

The original chart of the epigenetic life cycle includes two elements as can be seen in Figure 6 on page 224. One is the physical development to which each stage is related. Erikson has continued to insist that psychoanalysis cannot do without its physiological point of reference.[3] New organs, of course, do not develop after birth as they do before, but new capacities do emerge.[4] The genital organs demonstrate this most dramatically in puberty, and Erikson points to analogous, though less spectacular, developments in other organs.[5]

Erikson emphasizes, however, that the stages of human development are not simply a genetic pattern working out its unyielding pattern throughout a person's lifetime.[6] He observes, for example, that human instinctive patterns are not as rigid and specific as those in other animals, and he cites the instance of the swallows brought from England to New Zea-

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[1] Erikson, CS, p. 273.

[2] Erikson, "Configurations in Play -- Clinical Notes," in The Psychoanalytic Quarterly, VI (April, 1937), 175-185.

[3] Ibid., p. 70.

[4] Erikson, IYC, p. 100.

[5] Erikson, CS, p. 81.

[6] "The Human Life Cycle," Encyclopedia, p. 286.

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VIII MATURITY								EGO INTEGRITY vs. DESPAIR
VII ADULTHOOD							GENERATIVITY vs. STAGNATION	
VI YOUNG ADULTHOOD						INTIMACY vs. ISOLATION		
V PUBERTY AND ADOLESCENCE					IDENTITY vs. ROLE CONFUSION			
IV LATENCY				INDUSTRY vs. INFERIORITY				
III LOCOMOTOR-GENITAL			INITIATIVE vs. GUILT					
II MUSCULAR-ANAL		AUTONOMY vs. SHAME						
I ORAL-SENSORY	BASIC TRUST vs. MISTRUST							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Fig. 6.-- Epigenetic Life Cycle

land, birds which tragically persisted in their instinctive patterns of flying south when the weather became cooler.[1] Freud, too, was aware of this. While his use of the word "instinct" occasionally refers to more clearly defined instinctive patterns, he more often uses the term to designate a more general drive or energy.[2] The patterns which develop for these drives emerge only after an extended childhood during which they are organized in a specific social environment.[3]

The importance of the environment in the development of an organism is already suggested by the embryological model of epigenesis. The growth of the fetus, too, is affected by its environment, including the social milieu of the mother.[4] The role of the social environment, of course, is much more significant after birth.

The second element Erikson includes in the epigenetic chart above is a distinctive quality of ego vitality which is associated with each of the eight stages. It is during the first stage of life, Erikson proposes, that a person's sense of trust and mistrust takes shape. Other psychosocial gains are made in subsequent stages, each in its own time, following the epigenetic model. The completion of each stage provides the basis from which the person moves into the next stage.[5] If one stage develops inadequately during its time of ascendancy, this will create difficulties in the following stages.[6]

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[1] Erikson, CS, p. 94.

[2] Erikson, ORM, p. 340.

[3] Erikson, CS, p. 95; IYC, 248.

[4] Erikson, "Problems of Infancy," p. 719.

[5] Erikson, IR, p. 115.

[6] Erikson, IYC, p. 93.

The chart (Figure 6) is arranged to demonstrate that each item is related to all the others. All of them are present from the beginning and are already evident to some degree before their particular critical periods. Similarly, they continue to be active in the person's life after those periods and to be subject to continual reformulation, although their fundamental pattern has been established.[1] In a later adaptation of the chart he demonstrated how one specific stage (identity/role confusion) is related to all the others.[2] (See Figure 7, page 227.) Erikson is proposing that such psychosocial qualities as identity/role confusion are anticipated by previous stages, are in a preliminary way active already in those stages, and are able to provide the necessary base for the stages yet to come. Again, the model of epigenesis is helpful. The soft, cartilaginous rib cage which forms in the fetus provides the space for the lungs, which will not yet appear until a later time. The rib cage, in turn, was anticipated by the tender spinal cord which took shape comparatively early in the development.

Throughout his career Erikson explores many dimensions of these stages. The chart on page 228 (Figure 8) draws all of them together to offer a cryptic overview.

There are social institutions which correspond to the ego quality developed during each stage.[3] These institutions foster this particular psychosocial gain in the individual, and the individual's experience of this ego vitality, in turn, gives new vitality to the institution.[4]

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[1] Erikson, IR, p. 140.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 94.

[3] Figure 8, p. 228.

[4] Erikson, IR, p. 155; IYC, p. 141; CS, p. 250; "The Human Life Cycle," Encyclopedia, p. 292.

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VIII								INTEGRITY vs. DESPAIR
VII							GENERATIVITY vs. STAGNATION	
VI						INTIMACY vs. ISOLATION		
V	Temporal Perspective vs. Time Confusion	Self-Certainty vs. Self-Consciousness	Role Experimentation vs. Role Fixation	Apprenticeship vs. Work Paralysis	IDENTITY vs. IDENTITY CONFUSION	Sexual Polarization vs. Bisexual Confusion	Leader and Followership vs. Authority Confusion	Ideological Commitment vs. Confusion of Values
IV				INDUSTRY vs. INFERIORITY	Task Identification vs. Sense of Futility			
III			INITIATIVE vs. GUILT		Anticipation of Roles vs. Role Inhibition			
II		AUTONOMY vs. SHAME			Will to Be Oneself vs. Self-Doubt			
I	TRUST vs. MISTRUST				Mutual Recognition vs. Autistic Isolation			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Fig. 7.--Epigenesis of Identity/Identity Confusion

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A.	B.	C.	D.	E.	F.	G.
Life Stage	Ego Vitality	Physiological Zones	Intimate Relationships	Social Institution	Virtues	Who Am I?
I.	trust vs. mistrust	oral respiratory sensory	mother	religion	hope	I am what I hope I have and give.
II.	autonomy vs. shame or doubt	anal muscular	father	law and order political and legal	will	I am what I can will freely.
III.	initiative vs. guilt	locomotor infantile genitals	Oedipal complex	economic theatre	purpose	I am what I can imagine I will be.
IV.	industry vs inferiority	working with external world	teachers	industry school	competence	I am what I can learn to make work.
V.	identity vs. identity confusion	genital maturation	adolescent romance heroes	ideology social stratification	fidelity	
VI.	intimacy vs. isolation	orgasm	sexual partner(s)	marriage relationship patterns	love	We are what we love.
VII.	generativity vs. stagnation	giving birth	children	education, art, science (all institutions)	care	
VIII.	integrity vs. despair	aging		tradition philosophy	wisdom	I am what survives of me.

Fig. 8.--The Eight Stages of Man

Besides these formal institutions another social dimension for each stage is the set of intimate relationships which surround a person at that time.[1] It is through these relationships that the world-image of the society is communicated to the developing individual. The society-at-large, for its part, supports these intimate relationships with a reliable context within which they can function.[2]

Erikson also proposes a series of vital strengths, "virtues," arising from the epigenetic life cycle.[3] He stresses that these are not ideals to be held out in front of the person as something to be striven for in each stage.[4] Instead, they are the vital sources of strength which are appropriate to each stage and which emerge from the psychosocial interaction during that time.[5]

The organismic quality of the epigenetic model has been carefully retained by Erikson and applied on a much larger scale. The organism which Erikson is interpreting is a "process" and not a "thing."[6] It is the whole person with his own peculiar background of experience in previous stages coming to a new stage in a specific social, cultural, and historical milieu. This holistic, rich, and potent mix is the "developmental actuality" which

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[1] See Figure 8, page 228, Column D.

[2] Erikson, CS, p. 249.

[3] See Figure 8, page 228, Column F.

[4] Erikson, IYC, p. 211.

[5] Erikson, IR, p. 113. The distinction between this use of virtue and the popular meaning of virtue as a high ideal which only saints achieve is similar to that Erikson makes between the ego ideal as it is used in psychoanalysis, which are not-quite-attainable goals which man is to keep trying to reach, and ego identity as he uses it in his own work, which is a sense of reality already acquired though subject to further revision. IYC, p. 211.

[6] Erikson, CS, p. 34.

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Erikson portrays for each stage.[1]

3. The dynamics of a crisis

It is the dynamics of the interaction between all of these elements within a particular stage that is the center of attention in this chapter and not the specific number or order of stages proposed by Erikson. While this particular charting of the life stages has proved especially fruitful in the interpretations it has offered, Erikson himself recognizes that there are other possibilities and that further research will be needed to come to a more adequate understanding of "what evolved order is common to all men."[2] Hinduism, for example, offers an alternative set of stages, and Erikson acknowledges that though there are striking similarities the two schemes cannot be correlated in detail.[3] However, both of them follow the epigenetic model.[4] That model, obviously, is what is important to Erikson and what he regards as universal,[5] and it is the way in which Erikson unfolds the dynamics of an epigenetic stage that is particularly helpful for the purposes of this dissertation.

Each stage is called a "crisis," the most succinct way of stating the dynamics which are involved. It implies a dynamic which is more complex than the galactic model of steady and continuous forces functioning uniformly through time and space. There is discontinuity.[6] The motion of the crisis is more pulsating, perhaps jerky, with abrupt stops and starts.

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[1] Erikson, IR, p. 176.

[2] "The Human Life Cycle," Encyclopedia, p. 292.

[3] Erikson, IR, p. 225.

[4] Erikson, GT, p. 38.

[5] Erikson, CS, p. 273.

[6] Erikson, IYC, p. 222.

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Strange new forces intervene from time to time to disturb the equilibrium at which the organism had arrived. They precipitate a crisis.

Such a crisis constitutes a threat to the homeostasis of the earlier period. It brings new dangers and fears to the situation, and there is good reason for anxiety. A crisis may bring catastrophe. It is possible that the new forces may overwhelm the existing configuration and that no adequate resolution may emerge from the crisis. From such disaster come the blockages which Freud so perceptively described as the result of man's complexes.[1]

However, those same new forces which threaten danger also bring with them new energies and make it possible for richer and stronger configurations to emerge. A crisis, in the epigenetic model, is a necessary turning point,[2] a crucial period where a decisive turn in one way or another is unavoidable.[3] The complexes which may complicate and pervert human growth are also the milieu out of which vital and creative energies and configurations arise.[4]

There is, of course, some continuity from one stage to another in the life cycle. Erikson recognizes this when he speaks of "the ever-new configuration that is the growing personality."[5] However, there is the "ever-new" quality as well. The old configuration is "transformed" as it passes through the crisis.[6] It is still possible to recognize some of the contours,[1] but they have taken on a whole new quality such as could not have been predicted before the crisis.

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[1] Erikson, CS, p. 63; IYC, p. 102.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 16.

[3] Erikson, IR, p. 139.

[4] Erikson, YML, p. 73; IYC, p. 276; CS, p. 258.

[5] Erikson, IYC, p. 96.

[6] Erikson, CS, p. 270.

Thus, the dynamic portrayed by an epigenetic crisis is one of transformational emergence. "Emerges" is about the right quality for describing the appearance of the new configuration. The element of surprise is always there when the new configuration begins to take shape. It has not been "manufactured" in a manipulated and planned way but has emerged out of the complexity of interaction during the crisis.

At the same time, the old configuration which proved inadequate at the beginning of the crisis has not been entirely discarded. What has happened is that it has been taken up in the dynamic interplay and thoroughly rearranged and enlarged. A transformed configuration has emerged.

4. The crisis of identity

The crisis which will be given particularly careful attention here is Stage V -- the crisis of identity vs. role confusion. It was demonstrated with great care earlier in this dissertation that identity belongs in the category of "configurations" in Erikson's work.[2]

There are, moreover, striking parallels, often explicitly described by Erikson, between the dynamics by which an individual, particularly a creative person, comes to a sense of his own identity and the way in which a society undergoes a crisis in its traditional patterns.[3] New forces make the old arrangement inadequate. When a new configuration emerges from those turbulent times, it offers a new vitality for a new era.

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[1] Erikson, IR, p. 96.

[2] Above, pp. 114-117.

[3] Erikson, IYC, p. 16; IR, p. 204; "Identity," Encyclopedia, p. 65; specifically, Erikson's studies of Luther and Gandhi.

While the identity crisis will be the primary paradigm used here to demonstrate the dynamics of transformational emergence, frequent references will be made to other crises in the life cycle and also to the crises experienced by societies. This is done under the assumption that the dynamics of a crisis will have the same fundamental pattern in all of these instances.

A. The Initiation of the Crisis: The Possibility of Transformation

If the organism remained in a state of complete homeostasis, the established configuration would continue to keep the energies and interplay in balance, and no new configurations would emerge. It is the precipitation of a crisis which initiates the move toward a new formation.

1. The configuration before the crisis

The person who is approaching the crisis involving his identity comes to that stage with considerable strength already developed. He has already worked through four other crises, each providing him with a unique quality of ego vitality.

He emerged from the first crisis with some balance of trust and mistrust, some capacity to trust himself as well as others and some capacity to recognize that there are also things in the world to be mistrusted. Some sense of autonomy and a capacity to exercise a free will came out of the second stage. From his initiative in role experimentation in the third stage came some anticipation of roles also for the future. The fourth stage brought some sense of competence or mastery, especially in relation to the technology and the "thing-world" around him.[1]

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[1] Erikson, IYC, pp. 96-128.

There were also problems resulting from each crisis, to be sure. The times of panic experienced in his family and community continue to leave their mark,[1] and every unresolved conflict from his childhood has remained with him as well.[2] As a consequence there are blockages which consume energy and warp the full possibilities of life. These limitations also form part of the configuration which approaches the crisis.

Even so, most people move toward the stage of identity formation with considerable strength. In addition to the distinctive vitalities appropriate to each of the earlier stages there have been those earlier intimations of identity itself found within the earlier stages. Already early in life a nucleus of a separate identity was in evidence when they resisted the pressures of over-identification with one or both parents.[3] Then, tentative identifications built up some expectations for future roles and identity fragments.[4] Self-images were explored and cultivated during the later stages of childhood,[5] and some tentative crystallizations of identity were already known.[6] Thus, already in the pre-identity configuration there is a preliminary sense of identity which has been gradually accruing through the earlier childhood crises,[7] enough so that the individual already knows approximately who he is.[8] Identity, like the other psychosocial vitalities, has been present to some degree from the beginning, long before its time of ascendance.[1]

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 55.

[2] _Ibid._, p. 82.

[3] Erikson, "Identity" in _Encyclopedia_, p. 63.

[4] Erikson, IYC, p. 161.

[5] Erikson, IR, p. 94.

[6] Erikson, IYC, p. 160.

[7] Erikson, CS, p. 412.

[8] Erikson, IYC, p. 160.

Consequently, the individual comes to this stage of identity formation with an impressive accumulation of strength. He could not be prepared for the crisis to come unless the previous crises had been worked through well enough to lay the necessary groundwork for this new event.[2] It may even be said that the crisis is possible only because the old configuration is so well established and integrated that a new stage can be risked.[3]

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When it comes to interpreting the implications of the pre-crisis configuration for the formation of symbols, an analogy from Henry Ford's "invention" of the car is helpful. Mr. Ford's contraption did not spring "de novo" upon the earth entirely disassociated from anything that had been known before. It was, after all, a "horseless carriage." Its basic shape was that of the horse-drawn carriage which had its own evolutionary history.

In a similar way, no symbol suddenly appears from nowhere as though it were a visitor from outer space which had nothing to do with previous history on earth. Although the new symbol has its own unique character, its continuity with some previous configuration is a recognizable one. Therefore, the student of symbols will always have some curiosity about the earlier forms from which new symbols emerged.

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[1] Erikson, CS, p. 271; IYC, p. 93; "Late Adolescence," p. 79.

[2] Erikson, CS, p. 271.

[3] Erikson, IYC, p. 100.

2. New factors provoking a crisis

The crisis is initiated by a wide range of new elements which converge[1] to usher in a new stage of development.

a. Physiology. If the somatic roots for each of the epigenetic stages is to be based on "the nervous excitability as well as the coordination of the erogenous organs," as Erikson proposes,[2] then of all the stages genital puberty is the most easily identified. It signals an entirely new constellation of drives and needs.[3] While such elements as autoeroticism, curiosity, and playfulness were already present in infantile sexuality and have to some extent been incorporated in earlier stages, they are amplified in such proportions by the arrival of puberty that the old ways of handling them prove entirely inadequate.[4] This new genital potency floods the body as well as the imagination with new images and new energies.[5]

The power of these new energies is multiplied by the general body growth[6] as well as increased locomotor capacities.[7]

These new physical drives, like the others in human life are still very diffuse. They do not carry their own patterns of completion within themselves[8] but must develop some type of organization during their period of ascendancy.

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[1] Erikson, IR, p. 142.

[2] Erikson, CS, p. 71.

[3] "The Human Life Cycle," Encyclopedia, p. 286.

[4] Erikson, IYC, p. 243.

[5] Ibid., p. 132.

[6] Ibid., p. 96; "Autobiographic Notes on the Identity Crisis," p. 752.

[7] Erikson, IYC, p. 243; YML, p. 42.

[8] Erikson, CS, p. 95.

b. Social relations. Changes in social relations correspond with these somatic changes. This is most immediately evident in the shift in the kind of personal relationships the person experiences. Partly because of his increased level of energy and his new capacity for locomotion and partly because of society's anticipation of the roles he will soon be expected to fill, he comes into contact with a great many more people and also with a wider range of types of people than he has known before.[1] The self-conscious concern which adolescents have about how they appear in the eyes of others is one symptom of the crisis precipitated by this widening radius of personal relationships.[2] Most significant of the new types of relationships is the approaching intimacy with the other sex.[3] This social interaction is one of the crucial elements in evoking a new stage and a new crisis for the individual.[4]

The entire society, similarly, is designed not only to cope with an epigenetic crisis once it appears but also to contribute to the provocation of the crisis. It invites the individual to exercise his new developmental capacities in the patterns of social interaction.[5]

c. Symbols. Although symbols are not identified by Erikson in a separate category, he actually includes some specific examples of how these symbols-as-cultural-objects contribute toward provoking a crisis. At one point Erikson goes so far as to say that whether or not a crisis is evoked depends upon whether or not the society wants to "make something of it."[1] That is somewhat overstated in the light of his total description of the process as being rooted in the life cycle. However, it convincingly establishes the point that society has a vital role to play in the initiation of the crisis. It is through its symbols that society exercises that role.

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 105; CS, p. 270; "The Human Life Cycle," p. 286; Erik H. Erikson, "Late Adolescence," in The Student Mental Health: An International View, Proceedings of the First International Conference on Student Mental Health and the International Association of Universities (no address), 1959, p. 92.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 128.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 132.

[4] "The Human Life Cycle," *Encyclopedia*, p. 287.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 286; CS, p. 270.

Gandhi's non-violent resistance, Satyagraha, is the most obvious example of how a symbolic action contributes to the initiation of a crisis in the expectation that a new configuration may emerge.[2] What is demonstrated most dramatically there is also evident as the society offers to its youth its ideology. For the adolescent to be presented with an ideology for him to receive is not merely a ready-made solution to an identity crisis but an evocation of the crisis in which he may confirm what feels true in that ideology but also may offer a "revolutionary correction" of what seems phony about it.[3]

As one element in the total dynamics of a crisis, symbols, too, participate from the very beginning of the process by which an identity configuration is shaped.

d. Technology. Technology plays an important part in the total life cycle, and receives considerable attention from Erikson. The new discoveries and inventions which technology introduces can trigger a crisis for an individual as well as for the whole society, calling for

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 107.

[2] Erikson, ORM, p. 349.

[3] Erikson, IYC, p. 134.

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a re-evaluation of traditional world-images.[1] The atomic bomb and the birth control pill are contemporary examples.[2]

e. Cognition. Man's cognitive capacities participate in the various epigenetic stages, according to Erikson.[3] It is especially evident in the identity crisis.[4] When Erikson speaks of cognitive powers in greater detail, he relies heavily on Piaget's contributions to the understanding of human development.[5] At this stage the individual, according to Piaget, is able to imagine alternatives and to consider hypothetical possibilities.[6]

This, in turn, forms the basis for what Erikson calls "the historical perspective," of which adolescents become capable. Their capacity to envisage possible alternatives without actually living through them points to their own future. This new capacity of the young person makes him aware of more possibilities and choices for the future than he will ever be able to manage.[7]

On the other hand, the ability to consider alternatives requires him also to look at the past in a new way. He realizes that any process can be understood by inverting it and retracing the steps backwards.[8]

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[1] Ibid., p. 259; "Identity," Encyclopedia, pp. 64 and 65; "Autobiographic Notes," p. 733.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 30.

[3] Erikson, GT, p. 225.

[4] Erikson, "Autobiographic Notes," p. 752.

[5] Erikson, IYC, p. 245.

[6] Ibid.; IR, p. 171.

[7] Erikson, IYC, p. 133.

[8] Ibid., p. 247.

Tracing back through the steps of history a sense of "historical fatality" begins to haunt him. Things have come the way they are through those events which actually did occur, and the thousands of alternatives once available to shape history did not have a part in making things the way they are. The young person is appalled at the thought that he has been trapped by history and fights to keep his future open and to have a chance in shaping it even though at the same time he is terrified by all the alternatives according to which he might fashion it.

This historical perspective with its contradictory signals is a new force on the horizon of the adolescent, and it is one of the elements which creates the crisis now at hand.

It is evident that Erikson has interpreted the cognitive element as more than a logical puzzle. The new cognitive powers have evoked a crisis which touches the center of the person and his place in the world. It affects his emotions, his perceptions, his actions, and his sense of orientation. It has contributed to this "sense of estrangement"[1] which permeates so much of adolescent experience.

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The appearance of "new factors" on the scene is itself something of a puzzle for the symbolic realist's approach. Symbols, after all, give meaning and coherence to the life of a society and of an individual. They establish the sense of significance. Cassirer especially makes it clear that symbols do not merely collect a number of disparate facts and assign some kind of meaning to them. Whatever we call "facts" are themselves already the expression of a symbolic frame of reference.[2] Since symbols function on such a primordial level of human experience so as to constitute what a man calls "reality,"[1] then what is the source of any "new factors" breaking into his experience?

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[1] "The Human Life Cycle," Encyclopedia, p. 287.

[2] Above, p. 23.

The Priestly tradition of the Hebrew creation myth offers a helpful clue to this problem. There it was the Word which gave shape to the chaos. Without the symbol (the Word) there was only chaos, darkness, and waste. The Word brings some sense or order into the cauldron of conflicting forces. Even after such a formation has taken place, it has not caught up all of the chaotic and elemental forces. The creation is an island of significance which never entirely tames the ebb and flow which surrounds it. Those primordial waters continually press upon that island, threatening to engulf it from all directions.[2]

This creation myth is the story of every man and of every culture, according to symbolic realism. It is through symbols that some meaning is given to the chaotic forces which press from every side. They build an island in the turbulent sea, or, perhaps better, carve out a clearing in the tangled jungle within which they establish meaning and significance. They make it possible for man to make enough sense of life so that he can function effectively in the world and have some sense of what he is about. Every symbolic configuration must draw upon the vital and organic powers of the jungle for its virility. Yet, those same forces are never completely tamed. Times of crises develop when such forces threaten to engulf the "reality" created by a symbolic structure.

Thus, in the formation of symbols, the new factors which initiate the crisis are not already ordered "facts" or "data" which have been created in an older symbolic configuration. They are, instead, new forces which have not been adequately incorporated by the existing symbols and which now have to be taken into account.

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[1] Above, pp. 19 and 20.

[2] Gen. 7:11.

3. New configuration required

a. The inadequacy of the old configuration. When all of these forces converge, it is little wonder that the old configuration proves to be inadequate for the new situation. The attitude which Nora had to her old household life in Henrik Ibsen's play, "A Doll's House," characterizes the way the old configuration appears. Once her family and her house had occupied Nora's life and attention entirely. By the end of the play, however, she announces to her husband that she is leaving it all behind. That same household appears to her now as a "play-room" in which she has been living as a "doll wife" taking care of her "doll children."[1]

In much the same way the adolescent views the earlier integration of his life as child's play, entirely too naive to cope with the new elements present in his life.[2] The opportunities and rewards it offered will no longer suffice.[3] Once more, as in earlier crises, the self-certainty which had been secured cannot withstand the discontinuity which has injected itself into the life cycle.[4]

The possibility that a similar crisis can face a public vision as well as an individual one is explored by Erikson in his treatment of the American dream.[5] He sees such events as the landing on the moon, the

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[1] Henrik Ibsen, A Doll's House in The Work of Henrik Ibsen (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917), VII, 179.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 234.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 162.

[4] Erikson, IYC, p. 160.

[5] Godkin Lectures, II, 217-345.

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bomb of Hiroshima, and the massacre of My Lai as symptoms indicating that "the American dream has over-reached its own comprehension of itself."[1] These are events which "cannot be integrated into the daily experience of America."[2] The dream of the elect people[3] and of the self-made man[4] "has played itself out" at My Lai, "a nightmare shared in broad daylight."[5] The forces now at work are raising serious questions about the old configuration. They are being raised, not least, by the generation on which the vision must rely for its continued vitality.[6]

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Tillich observes that symbols die "because they can no longer produce response in the group where they originally found expression."[7] Kuhn's analysis of scientific paradigms, similarly, portrays not only the ascendancy of such paradigms but conveys a sense of the "fatigue" which Whitehead describes[8] when he (Kuhn) portrays the exhaustion of a scientific paradigm. They are no longer so promising for opening up new possibilities for exploration. Contradictions ("anomalies") develop until the paradigm is sustained only at great effort instead of bouyantly supporting and holding together the scientific enterprise. The signs become clear that a crisis is at hand.[1] The "fatigue" syndrome suggested by Kuhn is not one that Erikson suggests, except, perhaps, for the double implication when he says that the American dream has "played itself out" at My Lai.[2] However, it can serve as a supplement to Erikson's epigenetic model. Erikson emphasizes how the completion of one stage means that sufficient strength and stability is now available to move on to another stage.[3] The other side of that observation may well be that when one stage has worked through the possibilities which it had opened up, its own orbit of inquiry becomes less interesting and the individual welcomes the new dimensions introduced by the next stage.

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[1] _Ibid._, II, 303.

[2] _Ibid._, II, 305.

[3] _Ibid._, II, 245.

[4] _Ibid._, II, 245.

[5] _Ibid._, II, 337.

[6] Erikson, "The Human Life Cycle," _Encyclopedia_, p. 286; CS, p. 263.

[7] Tillich, _Dynamics of Faith_, p. 43.

[8] Alfred North Whitehead, _The Function of Reason_ (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958 and 1966), p. 23.

In connection with the decline of such "public visions" as scientific paradigms, religious symbols, or American dreams it should be noted that at the same time that they are still acceptable to most everyone who is living and working within them there will be a few perceptive people who already see the fatigue setting in.[4] They are the first to find it difficult to endure the contradictions, and they will likely be provocateurs of the crisis to come.

b. The necessity of a new configuration. Yet, disturbing as such innovators may be, they are pointing toward a "to-be-restored wholeness" which will be more adequate and which will offer new possibilities of its own."[5]

This process of pulling things together, of "making sense of" this whole new conglomerate of forces -- new opportunities mingling with old familiarities -- becomes the essential task of the new crisis.[1] Coming to a sense of identity is as important for the individual as are his experiences of intimacy or of autonomy or of being able to trust others as well as himself. Erikson points out that in the time of crisis it is as elemental as "food, and security and sexual satisfaction."[2]

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[1] Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, pp. 70-72.

[2] Godkin Lectures, II, 337.

[3] Erikson, IYC, p. 100.

[4] Ibid., p. 32.

[5] Erikson, IR, p. 156; IYC, pp. 248-249.

Erikson first used the term "identity crisis" while he was providing therapeutic treatment for veterans during the Second World War at the Mt. Zion Veterans' Rehabilitation Clinic. Most of the patients suffered not so much from "shellshock" or "battle fatigue" as from the lack of "a sense of personal continuity or sameness."[3] In that clinical setting it became clear to him that this was not merely a neurotic breakdown of old patterns but the cry for a new and more vital sense of being himself.[4] Such a new configuration would not be felt as something which would limit or inhibit his personal development. It would, instead, give some organization to the disparate drive fragments, social demands, and cognitive apprehensions which constitute his crisis.[5]

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Since it is the primary function of a symbol to give meaning to a person or situation, the collapse of a traditional symbolic structure urgently calls for a new one. Perhaps the central emphasis in Erikson's work is that the human requirement for identity is as powerful an instinctual force in the human experience as the forces of eros and thanatos, which Freud unfolded. Thus, the "necessity" for more appropriate symbols becomes urgent indeed when the existing one is no longer adequate.

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[1] Erikson, IR, p. 90.

[2] Erikson, "Problems of Infancy," p. 724.

[3] Erikson, IYC, p. 17.

[4] Erikson, IR, p. 203.

[5] Erikson, CS, p. 95.

c. The terror of the transition. For some the arrival of the crisis may be a quiet affair, perhaps even somewhat exhilarating as new capacities find opportunities. For others it will be traumatic.[1] For all, however, there is something of the experience of the trapeze artist who lets go of one ring and remains momentarily suspended in mid-air until another ring is there to grab.[2] There is that moment of suspense, the time in-between. Together with every stage there is not only the possibility of a psychosocial gain but also of severe estrangement.[3] In this stage and in this milieu it is not only identity which is made possible. The loss of identity also becomes a possibility. The threat of identity loss is "unavoidable."[4]

"Elemental things are dangerous," Erikson reminds his readers.[5] Identity crises are not to be passed off casually by observers as "a stage he is going through." Everything is risked in order that everything may be gained. The outcome is never guaranteed in advance.

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The similarity of the dynamics of the approaching crisis to Joseph

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[1] Erikson, IR, p. 139.

[2] Ibid., p. 90.

[3] Erikson, IYC, p. 101.

[4] Ibid., p. 132.

[5] Ibid., p. 248.

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Campbell's hero monomyth[1] is hard to avoid. Campbell claims that there is a fundamental pattern which is held in common by the myths and stories of heroes to be found in diverse cultures throughout the world. The hero leaves his home or castle, his familiar territory, and, often in the company of a helper, is ushered to the threshold of the underworld. It may be through a tunnel, or a pass, or a hole. In the dark regions there he is subjected to terrifying adventures quite beyond the scope of anything he has known back home. After various tests or trials he finally gains the boon or the elixir at the heart of the underworld ("the belly of the whale"). He is usually pursued, but if all goes well, he manages to escape from the underworld again and return to his home as the possessor of the elixir. The journey is not assured, however. Myths deal with elemental things. Some are killed before they ever see the elixir they seek. Others lose the elixir before they return to their homes.

To enter the identity crisis is to pass the threshold beyond the familiar regions of the old configurations and into a strange new territory filled with all manner of new and unmanageable forces. The treasure to be snatched and the secret for securing it are not known in advance but discovered in the process of the journey.

The hero, however, has some resources to take with him as he crosses the threshold.

4. Resources for a new configuration

The epigenetic model indicates that it is in crises that new symbols are formed. This is not to suggest a "Sturm und Drang" romantic notion for symbolic formation. What it does imply is that a symbol is likely to take shape when all the elements which contribute to its formation are interacting in a "highly charged" situation. All of those elements are in a particularly sensitive condition, poised for response. A configuration settled into a homeostatic position in which mutual regulation has established a balanced equilibrium is healthy and highly desirable. It is not, however, the setting from which a symbol is likely to be formed.

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[1] Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces.

a. The new forces. Crises are created when many forces converge to disturb that settledness. They are threatening and ominous forces because they upset the familiar patterns. However, these same forces also are the resources available for resolving the crisis and shaping the new configuration. At Luther's time, for example, the forces of geographic expansion, new technology, armament, holy wars, and communication "envigorated" as well as threatened their age.[1]

The new cognitive powers which raise the disturbing questions about historical inevitability and alternatives for the future are at the same time one of the great forces making it possible to find some kind of coherence in this new situation. Erikson would never propose that the process of identity formation is a purely rational one. Yet, his frequent description of that process in terms of "giving meaning to"[2] and "making sense of"[3] makes it clear that the cognitive dimension is one of the resources available for working through the crisis.[4]

The awesome new sexual powers in a similar way upset the procedures that had been adequate before they arrived on the scene. Yet, these, too, will serve the process by "enhancing a sense of style and identity."[1]

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[1] Erikson, YML, pp. 54, 55.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 140.

[3] Erikson, IR, p. 90.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 225.

The awareness of the future which has broken into the picture in adolescence not only disrupts patterns which had been satisfactory without it. It also becomes one of the crucial ingredients contributing to the new sense of identity.[2]

The historical identity fragments which are so often conflicting and contradictory and seem to tear apart any approximations of continuity[3] are at the same time "waiting to be tied together."[4] When that happens, they contribute to a powerful new cohesive strength.[5]

The expanded range of social relationships helps to break down the old patterns, but it is in those same relationships, such as peer groupings, that the adolescent finds one of the most helpful elements for working through the crisis.[6]

Social institutions were mentioned as one of the forces which "invite" the approaching crisis. It is the specific task of society to develop institutions which will be adequate to support the developing potentialities and to receive them in a way which is satisfying both to the individual in his search and to the society in its continuing tradition.[7] Often social institutions do this by sustaining the people who have intimate personal relationships with the person as he works through his crisis.[8]

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 242.

[2] _Ibid_., pp. 211 and 248.

[3] _Ibid_., p. 159.

[4] _Ibid_., p. 195.

[5] Erikson, IR, p. 165.

[6] "The Human Life Cycle," p. 290.

[7] _Ibid_., p. 286; IYC, pp. 42, 141 and 246; IR, p. 152.

[8] _Ibid_., p. 288; IR, p. 152.

The technology, which can be so disruptive, is also seen by Erikson to serve as a great resource for consolidating a person's sense of his own identity.[1] It is one of the powerful factors in securing identity for a great many people without enduring a conscious crisis.[2] It also holds great promise for helping to forge a new and more inclusive identity for man in the future,[3] as printing did at the time of Luther.[4]

Every new force, then, not only serves to initiate the crisis but also provides a strategic resource to be used in working through the crisis effectively.

b. The old configuration. With the invasion of the new forces the old configuration appears at first to be left entirely dismembered. It is often regarded as more of a hindrance than an asset in the attempt to deal with the new situation. Yet, Erikson makes it clear that "a dream must not be simply abandoned; it must be completed."[5]

This comment comes early in his discussion of the American dream. For all the emphasis that lecture places on the collapse of that old configuration, Erikson does not propose that the dream be discarded as one that has outlived its usefulness. Immediately following his description of that dream as one which "played itself out" at My Lai and exposed itself as a "nightmare," Erikson insists that America "must now have the courage to define the limits of national and technological expansion, not as a defeat but as a contribution to a new and universal man."[6] According to such a dynamic of symbolic formation the new symbols do not emerge in isolation from the old but by working through the old toward the new -- by a transformation of the old.

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[1] Erikson, IR, p. 107.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 31.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 42; IR, p. 157.

[4] Erikson, YML, p. 225; IYC, p. 42; IR, p. 157.

[5] Godkin Lectures, II, 236.

[6] *Ibid.*, II, 343.

For the individual, similarly, Erikson sees the old configuration as being a critical resource for the process of identity formation. No newly formed configuration will be adequate unless it incorporates all that a person has been during his childhood.[1] Identity formation renews old strengths as well as initiating new ones.[2] The most creative new identities will emerge from those lives which approached the time of crisis with a rich childhood experience to provide the necessary roots.[3]

The resources in the old configuration will include all the "tentative crystallizations of identity" mentioned earlier.[4] There is, evidently, also a rich store of fragments brought forward from childhood. They include prototypes offered in the society[5] as well as early childhood identifications[6] and introjections.[7] Many of them have never been fully integrated into the person's evolving sense of his own continuity.

These fragments from childhood configurations can be compared to Erikson's observations about Freud's records of his own dream experiences. Freud used these dream descriptions to demonstrate his own theoretic approach. Nevertheless, his accounts are so carefully developed that they

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[1] Erikson, IR, p. 91.

[2] Erikson, "Autobiographical Notes on the Identity Crisis," p. 752.

[3] Erikson, IR, p. 99.

[4] Erikson, IYC, p. 160.

[5] Erikson, IYC, pp. 55 and 58; CS, p. 243.

[6] Erikson, IR, pp. 91 and 92.

[7] Erikson, IYC, pp. 55 and 159; IR, p. 214.

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include many suggestive and productive elements which Freud did not use specifically in support of his own theory.[1] Just as Freud's dream accounts included not only the operative configuration but other fragments which could serve as later sources both for him and his readers so also the childhood experiences which are brought to the time of identity formation include such fragments as well as the tentative configurations which have been formed.

The crisis has been initiated, then, with powerful and disruptive forces. In the process, however, it has also been provided with promising resources to be used in working it through. Those resources include the old configuration as well as the new forces. Moreover, all these resources are brought together in a "highly charged" situation in which all the elements involved as well as the person as a whole are vulnerable, on the one hand, and highly sensitive and responsive to each other, on the other hand. It is as though all had converged to form a "critical mass."

* * *

Similarly, in the case of the formation of symbols, those forces which provoked the imminent collapse of a symbolic structure and those dying symbols which have become a burden to the human experience are the unlikely resources out of which new symbols emerge. Only in the intensive interaction which occurs in a time of crisis, however, can something creative develop.

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[1] Erikson, IR, p. 177.

B. Working Through the Crisis: The Process of Transformation

1. The dynamics of the ego process

What happens as the crisis is worked through toward a resolution Erikson calls "the ego process." The interaction includes an inner need to give some coherenee and continuity to the conglomeration of new forces which have precipitated the crisis.

This process is so close to the core of human life[1] that no one can dare approach it without some sense of awe. It has to do with what makes us what we are, and there will probably always be an element of mystery about such elemental levels of human experience. Erikson acknowledges that the dynamics of this ego process are not really known yet.[2] What follows here is an attempt to give some systematic order to the description that Erikson gives about that process. That description, however, is more suggestive than definitive, and it would do violence to the appropriate reverence with which Erikson deals with this process to imply that he proposes a detailed analysis. Nevertheless, he does offer an interesting exploration of this mysterious realm.

a. Defending. Erikson's choice of the term "ego" originated in Freud's use of the term. Its counterplayers in Freud's analysis were the id and the superego. Freud regarded the ego, in Erikson's words, as a "pathetic compromiser," caught between two powerful forces,[3] like a rider "obliged to guide [his horse] where it wants to go."[4]

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 22.

[2] Erikson, IR, pp. 90, 91 and 141.

[3] Ibid., p. 147.

[4] Ibid., p. 148.

It was Anna Freud who served as Erikson's mentor in psychoanalysis.[1] She began to develop the potentials of her father's ego psychology, continuing with his emphasis on its task as "the manipulator of defenses against drives."[2]

In one of his earliest published writings, Erikson reviews a book by Anna Freud. Already there he indicates his interest in the contribution psychoanalysis can make to a better understanding of the ego.[3] As he pursues this interest and expands on the role of the ego, he never drops the ego's defensive functions from its dynamics.

True to his Freudian tradition he continues to affirm that the ego has the responsibility of guarding against "sudden spurts of drives" and "alternating pressures of conscience"[4] -- against the id and the superego. He sees a parallel in the animal world because animals, too, "have a built-in regulator which prevents (or 'inhibits') carnivorous excess, inappropriate sexuality, useless rage, and damaging panic."[5]

Erikson goes on to state the positive implications of this defensive role of the ego. Not only does it defend against threatening forces; it also protects "the inviolacy of the person" including such essential qualities as "a sense of wholeness" and "a sense of freedom of choice."[6]

If the ego process is seen as the movement toward the formation of an identity which will give some sense of sameness and continuity, then this defensive function can be viewed as a part of that process. With such a highly charged setting only a powerful drive toward pulling it all together can prevent it from exploding beyond recognition. As Erikson describes it, this defensive function is a positive force designed to serve the individual's requirements for integration rather than a limiting and oppressive force which stands in the way of all man's "natural" drives. It protects the person from "excessive stimulation from within the organism or from the environment."[1]

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[1] Erikson, "Autobiographical Notes on the Identity Crisis," p. 739.

[2] Erikson, "Late Adolescence," p. 76; YML, p. 19.

[3] Erik H. Erikson, Review of _Psychoanalysis for Teachers and Parents_ by Anna Freud, _Psychoanalytic Quarterly_, V (April, 1936), p. 293.

[4] Erikson, "Late Adolescence," p. 75.

[5] Erikson, IR, p. 150.

[6] _Ibid._, p. 148.

In terms of the approaching expectation of integration this defensive function serves as a screening process for "all the impressions, emotions, memories, and impulses which try to enter our thought and demand our action, and which would tear us apart if unsorted and unmanaged."[2] Of all the demands made from the cauldron of images and energies only a few penetrate the defensive activity of the ego process.

b. Selecting. Another way of stating that function is that during the ego process only a few of the many resources available are "selected." This is more typical language for Erikson. At one point he summarizes the ego process in three words -- test, select, and integrate.[3] These will be the primary points for this analysis of the dynamics of the ego process. Erikson finds them analogous to the functions of the ego according to earlier usage in philosophy.[4]

The process of selection is one of choosing those items which hold some promise for a possible new configuration. Every person involved in an identity crisis engages in such selectivity, but the peculiarly keen selective perception of more creative people[1] serves as a more obvious demonstration of the process. There are two sources from which such selections may be made. One is from within the person's past and present experience, and the other is from outside sources which are available to him and which become interesting to him now that he is concerned with possibilities for identity formation.

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[1] Erikson, IR, p. 148; IYC, p. 156.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 218.

[3] Ibid., p. 210

[4] Erikson, IR, p. 217.

i. Sources from within. Any of the rich range of sources listed earlier as resources for the new configuration[2] may be drawn upon for this selection. Only a few specific instances need to be cited here. Gandhi drew on his childhood experience (e.g., life in a large household and his sense of a negligent absence at the death of his father) as one of the sources for his new configuration.[3]

Childhood identifications also serve frequently as a source for these selections. The way in which Gorky drew on the figure of the Gypsy for the imagery of his future identity[4] stands as but one example of "selective accentuation of significant identifications throughout childhood."[5]

There are also those early prototypes of good and evil which were communicated in "fairy tales and family lore, superstition and gossip, and the simple lessons of early verbal training."[6] Such images may be selected at this moment of crisis as initial clues to finding one's way through to an adequate identity.

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[1] Erikson, YML, p. 46.

[2] See pp. 246-251.

[3] Erik H. Erikson, "Gandhi's Autobiography: The Leader as a Child," The American Scholar, Autumn, 1966, p. 641; "On the Nature of Psycho-Historical Evidence: In Search of Gandhi," Daedalus, Summer, 1968, p. 724; GT, p. 128.

[4] Erikson, CS, p. 380.

[5] Erikson, IYC, p. 209.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 257.

ii. Sources from outside. A new ingredient enters the process at this point. The demands of the crisis for some way of bringing all of these forces together into a meaningful configuration presses the adolescent to look not only within himself but also outside of himself to a wide variety of proposals which offer themselves as ways of resolving the crisis. Such sources had not been of much interest to him before, but now the drive for some kind of continuity is so urgent that he finds them intriguing.

Most common among these sources is the ideology which is offered by the society. He has already been in touch with the world-image held by the society during this childhood training. Now he is ready for a more systematic account of how his society makes sense out of the world. Because it is concerned with coherence, the ideology is a somewhat simplified image of how the world is.[1] This quality makes it especially attractive to the adolescent who is seeking such coherence.[2] Another appealing aspect of an ideology is that it offers proposals of what can be made of the future as well as of the present.[3] The ideology emerges as the "social institution" which serves the particular needs of this crisis and through which the society hopes to draw new strength for itself from its youth.[4] The ideology offers itself as a ready-made resolution of the crisis which comes in adolescence.

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 187; above, pp. 112-115.

[2] Ibid., p. 190.

[3] Ibid., p. 31; compare also Frederik L. Polak, "Utopia and Cultural Renewal," in Utopias and Utopian Thought, ed. Frank Manuel (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), p. 285.

[4] Ibid., p. 134; CS, p. 263.

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Leaders and heroes also hold particular fascination for the adolescent in crisis. Such people offer to youth a way to put the world together and a way to shape the future. They offer to others the solution which they found for their own personal crisis.[1] They may be the creative heralds of a new age, or they may be demagogues skillfully manipulating the urgent needs of youth. In either case, they stand for an image that proposes to be great enough to resolve the conflicting forces which have initiated this crisis, and the person in the middle of that crisis finds himself drawn to such possibilities.[2]

The young person who is casting about in search of some way to make sense of a turbulent world may also be attracted by a "counter-vision" or a "negative identity." Besides the "official" ideology of a culture, the configuration which provides its coherence, contemporary societies harbor a number of counter-visions which offer themselves as alternative ways of resolving the crisis.[3] On the one hand, they hold the promise of the future. The American dream, like other dominant ideologies, was once itself a counter-vision.[4] On the other hand, most counter-visions are short-lived and lack the necessary strength for ushering in a new age.[5] Youth, of course, has no guarantee of what the future holds for any specific counter-vision, so they all remain before him as promising ways of dealing with his crisis.

The various roles which society offers to the individual suggest ways in which he may define himself. Another alternative open to him is to take the opposite of those roles, a "negative identity." A family may have been so preoccupied with portraying the evil nature of a particular role (e.g., drunkard) that the image becomes an intriguing one for the adolescent. Every society has its outsiders -- an ethnic out-group or an oppressed minority -- and these identities, which the ego fears most at first, may later be grasped as a way of identifying himself.[1]

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 258.

[2] Ibid., pp. 246 and 248; CS, p. 269; IR, pp. 92 and 208.

[3] Godkin Lectures, II, 345-273.

[4] Godkin Lectures, II, 345.

[5] Godkin Lectures, II, 372.

There are just a few people -- the "lucky" and the "gifted" -- who can reach back through history and recognize in books or pictures or music the promise of an identity configuration which can take on new vibrancy in the present situation.[2] It was, for example, Luther's reading of the Psalms which was the occasion for the breakthrough in his tower experience.[3]

Thus, the ego process of selecting those first intimations of how a new and adequate identity might take shape may reach not only into its inner resources but also to these intriguing new sources which interest him for the first time and now become a part of his total field of interaction.

* * *

What this suggests for the process by which symbols are formed is that at a very early stage there is a selection of images which hold promise as the seeds for the development of a new symbol. A wide range of such images are available.

The criteria for selecting some images over others is not specified by Erikson. They must, however, be related to the dynamics of "recognition" mentioned in the last chapter[1] and of "fidelity" as described later in this chapter.[2] In other words, an image attracts particular attention when it strikes a responsive chord, a resonance or, in other words, when it "rings true" at one point in this situation of expectancy.

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 58.

[2] _Ibid._, p. 187.

[3] Erikson, YML, pp. 201-204.

These first glimmers of the process are subliminal and they can be described only by analogy to more highly developed aspects of human experience. This level of the process is comparable to that primordial stage of symbolic formation which Cassirer calls intensification.[3] The vortices which emerge from the flux of experience are more felt than observed. It is as though they present themselves more than that they are lying passively and waiting to be "chosen." The person who experiences these early intimations in the formation of a symbol is more likely to agree with Nietzsche[4] and with Paul[5] that they were received as gifts and not invented.[6]

c. Testing. Experimentation is another aspect of the ego process. The analysis here does not mean to suggest that the process of identity formation happens in a predictable way with selections being made first, then a testing of these selections, and finally a synthesizing based on the results of the experimentation. Testing is continually involved in the process. One can speak of the testing as being involved in the selection of the initial fragments in anticipation of the promise they hold. All tentative syntheses are subjected to testing, and the emerging identity goes

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[1] Above, pp. 211-220.

[2] Below, pp. 288-295.

[3] Above, pp. 32-37.

[4] Friedrich Nietzsche, "Composition of Thus Spake Zarathustra" in Ecce Homo (New York: Modern Library, 1927).

[5] 1 Cor. 15:3 and 10.

[6] Below, pp. 394-396.

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through its time of trial before the crisis comes to some degree of resolution.

i. The purpose of testing. Once an image has been selected from one level or one point in this highly charged setting it becomes important to see whether or not it will strike some sparks of recognition from other points. These initial images are exposed and highly vulnerable and in need of support if they are to survive their first selection.[1] Erikson calls this the "search for reliable alignments."[2]

If such a fragmentary identity finds points of association and response from other elements in this process, then it begins to gather some momentum. It reminds me of trying to start my old 1927 Chevy. When one cylinder fired, the motor started to turn over. However, there was not enough momentum for the engine to continue running unless another cylinder would be sparked into action by the first. The first firing was always most welcome to my aching arm, but then there was the moment of suspense to see whether another cylinder would pick up the action which had begun.

The other purpose of such testing is to give the person a chance to "objectify" that tentative identity image. It remains quite diffuse until it has been tried on. This gives an opportunity to see the image reflected and clarified by other elements in this mix.[3]

Gandhi stands as a primary example of this process. The subtitle of his autobiography is "The Story of My Experiments with Truth."[4] Erikson observes that Gandhi did not simply take his childhood experiences and work

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 252.

[2] Ibid., p. 87.

[3] Ibid., p. 132.

[4] Gandhi, Mohandas K., An Autobiography, tr. Mahadev Desai (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957).

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them out in his adult life. "A crank, a fanatic and a psychotic could manage that."[1] What Gandhi was able to do was to engage the resources of his childhood in a lively series of experiments. He tried out different combinations in the interplay between the social and political situation of his adult life and his earlier life experience. Out of this experimentation emerged the distinctive style and power which were Gandhi's.

ii. The risk of testing. The ego process results in a commitment by the individual.[2] One way to speak of the dynamic of testing is as a tentative commitment which tries an image on for size to see how it works. Such tentative commitment is no longer the playful explorations of childhood. It is more serious than that. Neither is it the settled commitment of adulthood. It is less serious than that.[3]

At this borderline between daring pretense and final commitment the individual exercises the precarious art of experimentation. It is a series of "I dare you" (often meaning, "I dare myself") enactments of trial roles carried out in a semi-deliberate fashion.[4] He has some sense of how vulnerable he is and also some realization of the urgent importance of working through this crisis. He will feel an intense commitment at the time that he tests a tentative image, as Shaw experienced during his interest in socialism.[5] Unless it is exercised with some seriousness, it will not have been an adequate experiment.[6] On the other hand, after he has moved

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[1] "Gandhi's Autobiography: The Leader as a Child," p. 645.

[2] See Section 3 below, pp. 264-266.

[3] Erik H. Erikson, "Reflections on the Dissent of Contemporary Youth," in Daedalus, XCIX (Winter, 1970), 163.

[4] Erikson, IYC, p. 164.

[5] Ibid., p. 188.

[6] "A clown is often not only the best but also the most sincere part of the Great Show," Ibid.

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through the crisis, he may look on such commitments as "foolishness."[1]

iii. The arena for testing. These experiments are not merely "a phase" the young person is going through. They are the serious interaction through which his identity is taking shape. If this testing is to accomplish its purpose, then it is important for the society to allow the adolescent some freedom to explore the possibility of various tentative identity images without being locked into a permanent involvement just because he tried one on for size.

This space for freedom to experiment Erikson calls a "moratorium."[2] Society offers youth some arena where it is more permissive,[3] where experiments are accepted with the tentativeness appropriate to them. College is the most highly organized of such spaces in American society.[4] There are a host of other opportunities as well: going out West or down under,[5] practicing an apprenticeship, or undergoing a period of "patienthood."[6] Today Erikson might well have added the apartment complexes for swinging single adults in Dallas and the communes in the Santa Cruz Mountains, Taos (New Mexico), Arlington (Virginia), and across the country. Erikson's own moratorium was a time of wandering across Europe as an artist,[7] and Freud's was an academic monastary in the physiological laboratory.[8]

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[1] Ibid., p. 158.

[2] Erikson, CS, pp. 262, 263.

[3] Erikson, IYC, p. 157.

[4] Erikson, "Late Adolescence," p. 74.

[5] Erikson, IYC, pp. 130, 131.

[6] Ibid., p. 157.

[7] Erikson, "Autobiographic Notes on the Identity Crisis," p. 743.

[8] Erikson, IR, p. 24.

Such a time allows the adolescent to delay the resolution of his crisis until he has had time to take some alternatives seriously. It gives him time for some serious, if transitory, commitments.[1] It makes it possible for him "to test the rock bottom of some truth before committing the powers of body and mind."[2] It allows him the opportunity of testing new and untried images,[3] of trying out extreme alternatives,[4] and of giving in to some of his most repressed tendencies from childhood just to see what possibilities and resources might be lurking there.[5]

Even with the protection of a moratorium, the testing process is a dangerous one. The young person may find himself irretrievably committed on the stage of history without intending to.[6] Yet, society as well as the individual benefits from these precarious experiments.[7] This is a critical stage in the dynamics of the ego process. It is right at the center of its function. Here the first recognizable shapes of an emerging identity are to be found. It is on the testing grounds where there is no pre-established criteria for a promising identity except that it "feels right" or that it resonates with a wide range of the elements involved in the testing process. These are elemental things -- and they are indeed dangerous.

iv. The methods of testing. First, the new cognitive powers of the adolescent make "formal operations" possible, according to Inhelder and

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 157.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 236.

[3] Erikson, IR, p. 92.

[4] Erikson, "IYC, p. 236.

[5] Erikson, "Autobiographic Notes on the Identity Crisis," p. 733.

[6] Erikson, IYC, p. 246.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 248.

Piaget.[1] Erikson builds on this observation not only to describe youth's initiation into the historical perspective but also to suggest that this is a helpful resource for the process of testing. This capacity to "conjure up systematically the full range of alternative possibilities that could exist at any given time"[2] makes it possible for him to do some of this testing cognitively. He can contemplate alternatives before he tests them in action, and, having tested them, can reflect about the implications.[3]

A second mode of testing is through talking. Erikson observes that so much of "young love" is not primarily sexual. It is, instead, an occasion for defining one's identity by projecting a self-image on another so that it is "objectified," set out where it can be seen. "This is why so much of young love is conversation."[4] (And why the telephone is continually tied up at our house!) This method of testing is also verified by interminable "bull sessions" in college dorms. Young people are indeed highly argumentative[5] and opinionated[6] in their search for identity.

A third pattern for testing is that of action. It is the most daring and the most promising of all the modes. Here is a powerful existential element in Erikson's dynamics. It is by acting in the world that man shapes his own destiny.[7] Just as the new powers of cognition serve the

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[1] B. Inhelder and Jean Piaget, The Growth of Logical Thinking from Childhood to Adolescence (New York: Basic Books, 1958).

[2] Jerome S. Bruner, The Process of Education (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960).

[3] Erikson, IR, p. 171.

[4] Erikson, IYC, p. 132.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 189.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 164.

[7] Jean Paul Sartre, Existentialism and Humanism, tr. Philip Mairet (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1948), p. 28.

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process of experimentation, so the new capacity for locomotion facilitates this process.

> The most widespread expression of the discontented search of youth as well as of its native exuberance is the craving for locomotion, whether expressed in a general 'being on the go,' 'tearing after something,' 'running around' or in locomotion proper, as in vigorous work, absorbing sports, rapt dancing, shiftless Wanderschaft, and the employment and misuse of speedy animals and machines.[1]

This is also reflected in the appeal of parades, marches, campaigns, migrations, and even riots. There is a parallel here to the contribution which the locomotor powers made in an earlier crisis toward the consideration of many possible roles.[2]

Action is the ultimate test. It is as he acts that the person comes to the most adequate sense of what works, of how this image fits, and of how well it is suited to the wide range of elements which must be satisfied. Action gives the evolving configuration some sturdiness and reliability. Gandhi, for example, when asked how he would know whether his proposals were "the truth" could only answer that he would know when they were tested by the people's readiness to suffer.[3] Moreover, such action does not only test the evolving configuration, it also gives it new strength and reliability. It actually may help a tentative identity to "come true."[4] "The ego gains strength in practice."[5] Erikson's emphasis on actuality over reality underlines its importance. Health is to be achieved not only by an awareness of one's situation but by an increasing ability to participate in the interaction of events and relations.[1] "Only trial and error can lead to the most felicitous avenues of action and self-expression."[2]

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 243.

[2] Erikson, IYC, pp. 115 and 116.

[3] Erikson, GT, p. 412.

[4] Erikson, IYC, p. 247.

[5] Erikson, YML, p. 217.

This is also the most dangerous of the modes of testing.[3] It requires the greatest commitment of the three and hangs on the brink of irreversible historical involvement. Once again the hero myth is evoked. It is through a series of dangerous trials-by-action that the hero approaches the elixir.[4]

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This process of testing has a direct association with the process by which symbols are formed. The first two modes of testing -- the imaginative and the verbally expressive -- both function on the symbolic level of testing. Without this level action would only be "acting out" and therefore ineffective and without significance. The symbolic level of testing is necessary in order to bring into focus the unconscious motives which are operating in the situation. On the other hand, if the testing of a symbolic configuration were to remain only on the symbolic level and never reach the arena of action, there would be only a proliferation of images, fanciful and embellished, but ineffectual, removed from the reality of activation.

With the interaction of both the symbolic and the active modes of testing each can make its distinctive contribution to the formation of the symbol so that it emerges with the necessary richness of texture and toughness for action.

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[1] Erikson, IR, p. 174.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 164.

[3] Erikson, IR, p. 204.

[4] Campbell, _op. cit._, pp. 97-109.

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d. Synthesizing. The fundamental requirement of this crisis is that some coherent configuration must take shape to bring the diversity of elements together into a Gestalt. This means that the primary function of the ego process is synthesis and that the other aspects of the dynamics are important only as they contribute to it.

Synthesis requires more than a patchwork collage of the various fragments involved in the process.[1] The process dare not deteriorate into "counterpointing" with one element pitted against another so that a person is forced to choose one over against the other.[2] It is the genius of this process that it is able "to blend opposites without blunting them."[3] All of the elements in this process are to be integrated into the new configuration.

Erikson never tires of repeating the centrality of this task for the ego process.[4] However, when it comes to describing the specific dynamics by which this is accomplished, he gives only occasional hints. In addition to the dynamics of selecting and testing which have just been explored, Erikson has offered the dynamics of mutual activation, the subject of the last chapter.

This suggests that the synthesizing aspect of the ego process is one of testing and adapting various identifications and ideologies until a "proto-identity" emerges to serve as a preliminary synthesis. This, in turn, is tested and adapted until it resonates with increasing amplitude

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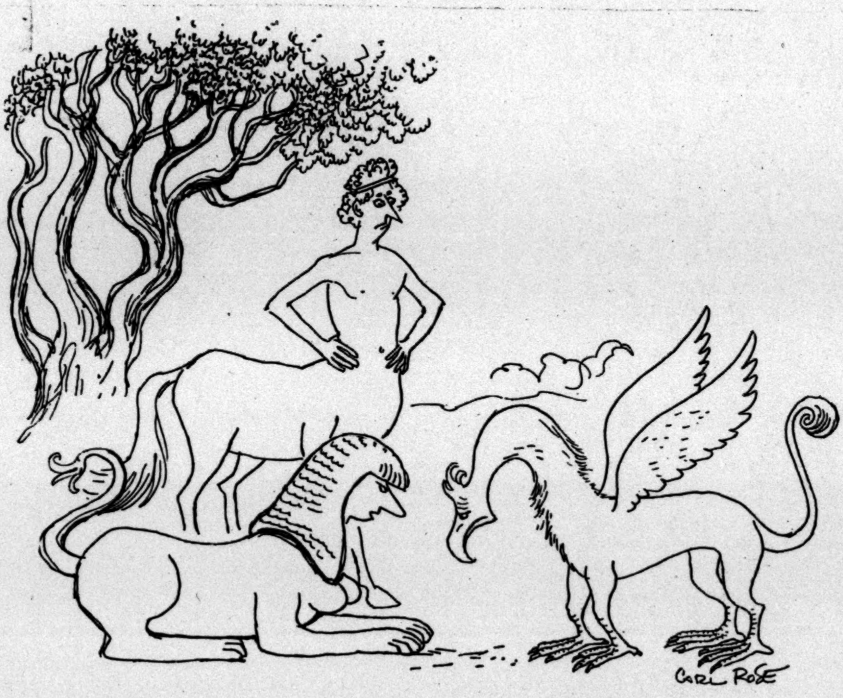
[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 88. For a portrayal of such a patch-and-glue synthesis, see Figure 9 on page 268.

[2] Erikson, IR, p. 92; IYC, p. 87.

[3] Erikson, Young Man Luther, p. 216.

[4] Erikson, CS, p. 261; IYC, pp. 148, 126, 163, 210 and 211; IR, p. 147.



"You think you're the only one around here with an identity crisis?"

FIGURE 9

with the wide range of elements involved in the process. That resonance would be comparable to the dynamics of recognition described in the last chapter. Such "proto-identity" configurations may be drastically altered or even discarded if they fail to evoke adequate recognition from the various elements which are participating.

Sometimes a person is forced to settle for a premature closure of his identity, either because society confirms him in such a proto-identity[1] or because he lacks the resources to carry the process through to its completion. In that case the identity process is not allowed to work through the crisis to a full resolution, and the identity for which he must settle will be shrunken or warped, one that he can sustain only in a style of "totalism" rather than "wholeness."[2] Hopefully, however, there will be sufficient time and space in the social moratorium and sufficient resources in the individual so that he will be free to continue the process until a more adequate proto-identity emerges.

When the synthesizing process is allowed to move toward an adequate resolution of all the interacting elements, an identity configuration emerges which is a unique integration resonating with the powerful forces which have been at work and calling them to new levels of possibility. For the new identity to have vitality it must be rooted in the deepest elements involved in the crisis. Erikson is not a promoter of faddish identities. He believes that only those identities are adequate which are rooted in "the sequence of generations."[3] A person can afford to find himself only in a configuration which has been "created and distilled in [his] culture

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 255.

[2] Below, Chapter VIII.

[3] Erikson, IR, p. 96.

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over a long period."[1] Any adequate identity will, of course, also be rooted in the person's physiology.[2] The confirmation of the identity by the society[3] is another one of those crucial elements to be satisfied. While these, together with childhood development and identifications, are the locations of the great tap roots for the new identity, all of the elements mentioned earlier[4] must similarly be caught up in it. The dynamics of the ego process in selecting, testing, and synthesizing include all of these resources as it gives shape to a unique configuration for each person.

* * *

By using this dynamics as a model it is possible to sketch a proposal for the way that symbols take shape during that delicate process of synthesis which gives them their unique character. The formation begins when a promising initial image suggests itself. It may have arisen from within the rich complexity of elements which are participating in the process, or it may have been drawn from "outside," from an ideology or a leader which proposed a way of pulling things together into a meaningful configuration. If it came from outside, then it must have struck a responsive cord in at least one of the internalized elements. For example, Fabian socialism offered such an image to George Bernard Shaw, and it had intense appeal to him because it spoke to his newly acquired historical perspective with its concern for the maldistribution of the world's wealth.[5]

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[1] Erikson, "Late Adolescence," p. 78.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 267.

[3] _Ibid_., p. 88.

[4] Above, pp. 246-251.

[5] Erikson, IYC, pp. 149 and 188.

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Once selected this image engages the other elements in the process in a pattern of mutual activation--acting upon them and being acted upon by them, activating them and being activated by them. Some of the elements may quite spontaneously and unhesitatingly support the image-on-trial and in so doing amplify it and give it new weight or strength.[1]

In other instances there will be modifications. The image itself had first been modified when it was selected. No ideology or any other image is received exactly as it was given. Certain aspects of it are more important in one situation than another. This is especially true of symbols with their multivalent quality. The levels of resonance will be different in one setting than they are in another. Whatever it was that first attracted the society to this image cast its own hue on that image in the very process of selection. This modification continues as the image comes in contact with the various elements involved in this crisis. In these early stages of its trial the image is highly malleable.

If the image finds very little response, it soon fades out of the interaction. Another image may find somewhat greater response but not enough to function symbolically. It may continue to participate in the process with a limited range of relevance and be subsumed in a symbol which develops later. However, eventually one of the images selected develops considerable support. As it gains in significance its development is affected increasingly not only by the response of more specific elements within the organism but also by the need of the entire organism for a coherent, over-all symbol bearing its own integrity.

As the image takes on its own distinctive shape and begins to "act" rather than "react," it begins to assume the earliest recognizable form and functions of a symbolic configuration. It is a proto-symbolic form. It has its own shape, and yet by its manner of development it also resonates with some of the deepest elements of human experience. Its interaction is still not completed, however. A great many such preliminary symbolic configurations are explored for every symbol which is finally developed.

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[1] Erikson observes how even geography as well as history may amplify familial patterns. CS, p. 345.

As the interplay continues the nascent symbol accrues increasing depth, strength, and stability. As a form which acts more than it reacts, it begins to have a greater influence on the elements of experience which it touches than those elements have on it. Another crucial stage of the process of integration appears. Those powerful forces which initiated the crisis are now themselves being changed by the developing symbolic configuration. If the impact of the emerging symbol proves to be illuminating, to open up new possibilities for those elements, to provide the necessary support for their effective functioning, to establish new relationships, and to offer new vitality for these elements, they will be caught up into it with little difficulty. They, in turn, will enhance its position and support its emergence as an effective symbol. A genuine synthesis is not possible without this transformation of the old images and the assimilation and absorption of new images into the developing symbol.

One proto-symbolic configuration after another may fall into disuse because it fails to evoke a sufficiently powerful recognition from the powerful forces at play in this interaction. Sometimes, of course, a society may be forced to defend a symbolic configuration before it has had a chance to mature. In that event the prematurely functioning symbol will tend to exercise a more brittle type of integration for the society and to demand a more totalistic allegiance.[1]

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[1] Below, Chapter VIII.

However, those proto-symbolic configurations which have an opportunity to develop to their full maturity through the continuing dynamics will continue to adapt until they are able to tap the deep wells of the powerful, elemental forces with which they interact. Increasingly they will open new possibilities for those forces of physiology, social relations, technology, cognition, etc., until a mutual activation develops between the newly-emerged symbol and these forces, each supporting and energizing the other. The symbol which matures through such a dynamics brings a creative and powerful integration into play, one which is adequate for orienting man in the world and for enlarging and enriching the possibilities of his life.

Some symbols, of course, will exercise this integrative function on a larger scale than others. While symbols generally develop according to the dynamics which have just been described, some will develop a wider range of interaction and will evoke more powerful responses than others. These symbols will be of a higher order in the sense that they resonate with greater strength and with more elements of human experience. They can serve to give coherence and vitality to more inclusive aspects of life and can even point beyond immediate experience to the mystery which surrounds human life.[1] Other symbols exercise a much lower level of multivalence. They emerge from a synthesizing process with a much more limited range of interaction and a correspondingly lower capacity to integrate experience than the other group. They also serve a necessary role in the total picture.[2] These symbols with lower multivalence, for example, are among the crucial elements in the dynamics just described in this section for the formation of more inclusive symbols.

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[1] Below, pp. 391-394.

[2] Above, p. 220.

2. The agency of the ego process

All of this suggests that man creates his own symbols through the process of selection, experimentation, and synthesis. Such a proposal would be in direct conflict with men like Tillich, who say that "a symbol cannot be produced intentionally."[1] Yet, Erikson's description of the agency involved in the ego process will not allow such a simplistic conclusion.

a. Conscious agency? In the first place, the ego process is not primarily a conscious one.[2] The entire process of selecting and testing and synthesizing is a metaphor taken from our conscious experience to describe what is happening unconsciously. The ego process, "luckily and necessarily,"[3] works much like the brain and the heart in doing for us "what we could never 'figure out' or plan consciously."[4]

If this process is unconscious, however, how is it that Erikson knows so much about it? One way is through that small part of the process, the tip of the iceberg, which acts consciously. Yet, it is necessary to draw on the conscious aspects of the process out of proportion to the degree of their influence in the total process just because they are more accessible to us and can serve as an inkling of the dynamics involved in the process which lies below the surface.

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[1] Tillich, Dynamics of Faith, p. 43.

[2] Usually Erikson describes the ego process as "for the most part unconscious." IYC, p. 23. However, in at least one instance, when he is contrasting the ego with the "I," he writes that "the ego is unconscious." Ibid., p. 218.

[3] Ibid., p. 23.

[4] Ibid., p. 218.

The process becomes evident when it runs into trouble. When the ego process is functioning well, the person experiences it as a sense of well-being, of "being at home in one's body," and of being sufficiently confirmed in the process by those around him.[1] However, when the crisis is prolonged and becomes a painful and protracted experience, the person becomes all too aware of what is happening to him.[2] Such identity-consciousness is one of the pathological aspects of the crisis.[3] Erikson's clinical experience provided the occasion for such a view of the process. Similar descriptions were gleaned from great men like Gandhi and Luther whose prolonged identity crises became visible and provided an opportunity to see openly the process which is hidden in the lives of most people.

Finally, the results of the ego process can be seen even though the process itself is hidden,[4] and these can give some clues to the process which brought them into existence. The "sense of identity" which emerges from the ego process is conscious (open to the person's own inspection) and behavioral (open to the inspection of others) as well as unconscious.[5]

The capacity to "look at one's self" transcends the ego process, and Erikson is very careful to designate this as the "I" in contrast to the ego.[6] It is the "center of volition and awareness,"[7] and emerges from

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 162.

[2] _Ibid_., p. 23.

[3] _Ibid_., p. 183.

[4] _Ibid_., p. 218.

[5] Erikson, CS, p. 251; IYC, p. 97; "Late Adolescence," pp. 76 and 77.

[6] Erikson, IYC, p. 218.

[7] _Ibid_., p. 135.

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the ego process. Such self-transcendence does not participate in the ego process as though it were an agent in control. Erikson acknowledges that "no man (except a man aflame and dying like Keats, who could speak of identity in words which secured him immediate fame) can transcend himself in youth."[1] Because of this Erikson is impatient with the people who go around asking "Who am I?" as though that were a way of getting at the profound interaction which he is describing.[2] Similar trivialization of the concept is reflected in the popularization of the term "identity crisis" as a conference theme.[3] What might he say about a 4-H conference held on the Wartburg College campus in June of 1973 under the theme, "Choose Your Own Identity!"

* * *

This issue is a crucial one for symbolic formation. "Symbolism is between consciousness and unconscious," as Norman O. Brown expresses it.[4] The unconscious is accessible to the conscious only through symbols which exist on the boundary between the two. Carl Jung, likewise, finds symbols to be the promising passageway to the unconscious.[5] In the passage from Tillich quoted at the beginning of this section, he does not mean to imply that because a symbol cannot be produced intentionally it simply appears from nowhere, entirely disassociated from anything in the human spirit.

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid., p. 314.

[3] "Autobiographic Notes on the Identity Crisis," pp. 730 and 731; IYC, pp. 15 and 16.

[4] Norman O. Brown, Love's Body, p. 216.

[5] Carl Jung, Man and His Symbols, p. 93.

Quite to the contrary, his position is that while symbols cannot be produced "intentionally" they do grow out of "the individual or collective unconscious" and are effective only if they are accepted by the "unconscious dimension of our being."[1] There is, then, a wide agreement that symbols are in that elusive zone where the unconscious and the conscious meet.

This makes the dynamics by which symbols are formed a process of mutual activation between all three -- consciousness, unconsciousness, and symbols. In this interaction symbols themselves play a mediating role, revealing the unconscious to the conscious life and making it accessible to the world of knowing.[2] On the other hand, the symbol also grounds man's conscious thought and action in the primordial depths of the unconscious, providing them with power and authenticity. Without the action of the unconscious the symbol would be a calculated and manipulative configuration devoid of energy and unable to capture the imagination of men. Without some involvement of consciousness the intimations of the unconscious would remain caught in the diffuse flux and flow of subliminal strivings, never effectively engaged in the action and reflection which humanizes them.

The dynamics described here for the formation of symbols points to the mutual activation of all three of these elements. The emerging symbol gains strength as it strikes sparks of recognition in the primordial depths of the unconscious. Similarly, new possibilities are raised for conscious action and thought as the symbol takes a more specific form. The unconscious offers intimations of images and a rich flow of energy. The conscious offers its own energy and also contributes its form-giving capacity. The developing symbol is continuously molded and remolded by the interaction until it arrives at a shape which finds optimum resonance on both the conscious and unconscious levels of human experience. The symbol ripened by such exposure to both the shadow and the light is one that is adequate for giving significance to human experience.

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[1] Tillich, op. cit., p. 43.

[2] Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, p. 348.

b. Controlling agency? However, to say that the ego process is almost entirely unconscious rather than conscious does not really settle the matter of "agency." It only removes it to another level. The question still remains: Does man create his own symbols?

i. Ego as mastery. The most obvious answer to be found in Erikson's work is "yes." "Each youth must forge for himself some central perspective and direction, some working unity, out of the remnants of his childhood and the hopes of his anticipated adulthood."[1] Is Erikson not the psychoanalyst who rescues man from the fatalism of "orthodox" psychoanalysis? In contrast to Freud, who regarded the ego as a rider who is "obliged to ride (his horse) where it wants to go,"[2] is it not Erikson who puts the ego back in control? "The dominant issue is that an active, selective ego is in charge."[3] The ego which has lost its mastery is sick and in need of therapy.[4]

ii. Evolution as necessity. Even though Erikson has such references to the role of the ego as a controlling agent, there is never any doubt in reading his work that the ego cannot act in an arbitrary way. Erikson scoffs at such attempts, labelling their results a "manufactured identity."[5]

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[1] Erikson, YML, p. 14.

[2] Erikson, IR, p. 148.

[3] Erikson, IYC, p. 246.

[4] Erikson, IR, p. 89.

[5] Erikson, IYC, p. 40.

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He is always very careful to describe the other powerful forces involved in the process and to insist on their influence.

(a) The epigenetic pattern is one of the things over which the ego has no control. This is based on certain "inborn potentialities"[1] or "in born dispositions"[2] which have both physiological and psychological requirements.[3] An act of the ego, for example, cannot change the infant's needs for food and affection. There is a certain minimum requirement which must be supplied or the infant will be harmed.

Then, too, these potentialities come at a rate and in an order which is predetermined.[4] These potential patterns also have certain minimum requirements which cannot be arbitrarily changed without doing damage to the person.[5]

Erikson has a delightful way of neatly dropping a phrase which may be interpreted in several different ways, and there is no way of telling which of the interpretations he has in mind. After some experience with this procedure it becomes evident that he means all of them. One such phrase is that man has "one and only one life cycle."[6] One of the interpretations of that, and the one suitable here, is that there is one specific epigenetic pattern which all men have as their life cycle. No matter how much "mastery" the ego enjoys, it cannot change that without warping the

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[1] Ibid., p. 233.

[2] Erikson, IR, p. 142.

[3] Erikson, IYC, p. 98.

[4] Erikson, IYC, p. 93; CS, p. 69; "The Human Life Cycle," Encyclopedia, p. 286; GT, p. 36.

[5] Erikson, CS, p. 80.

[6] Erikson, IR, p. 157.

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person.

(b) A specific social environment has been a part of each person's life by the time he reaches the stage for his identity crisis, and the ego cannot change that history.

One of the requirements of the epigenetic pattern is that each stage requires "conditions favorable to its potentials"[1] if they are to develop according to the "inner laws of development."[2] The inborn potentialities do not emerge automatically by virtue of birth. They will arise only as they are "provoked" by a social environment.[3] The potentiality of fidelity, the ego strength which can emerge from the identity crisis, as an example, can develop only in a social interplay.[4] Thus, the life cycle is a principle that tends to perpetuate a series of vital virtues,[5] but this tendency requires adequate support in a mutual activation with society. To suppose that human vitality can develop without such interaction is to fall into the "naturalistic fallacy"[6] of attributing moral intentions to the evolutionary process. The epigenetic pattern requires a social environment to be fulfilled.

While there is a certain limitation as to the type of environment required by the body, its needs and its wishes, for each stage of its development,[7] there is still a wide range of leeway allowed so that societies may use a great number of ways in meeting those minimum needs.[1] Erikson's comparison of the Sioux and the Yurok stands out as the most striking example in his research of the varied ways in which societies have responded to the requirements of the epigenetic pattern.[2] "Cultures . . . elaborate on the biologically given."[3]

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[1] Ibid., p. 176.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 93.

[3] Erikson, CS, p. 80.

[4] Erikson, IYC, p. 235.

[5] Ibid., p. 233.

[6] Erikson, IR, p. 142; IYC, p. 233.

[7] Erikson, IYC, p. 111.

The environment that has developed in any society is the result of the persistent effort of one generation after another to respond to the needs of the epigenetic pattern.[4] An effective environment does not spring up spontaneously but develops through a sequence of generations.[5]

There were a lot of ways in which a society might have developed, but there is one specific way in which it did actually go through the experience and interaction of many generations. When an individual grows up in any particular culture, that society meets each stage of his life according to the way in which it conceives of that crisis.[6] Already his infancy develops according to a particular cultural style.[7] Gradually, as the individual moves from one stage through another a particular world image and style is conveyed to him in a cumulative way.[8] Every individual grows up in one specific social environment and not in any of the millions which "might

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[1] Ibid., p. 98.

[2] Erikson, CS, pp. 179-181.

[3] "Sex Differences in the Play Configurations of Preadolescents," p. 691.

[4] Erikson, IYC, p. 223.

[5] Erikson, IR, pp. 96 and 220.

[6] Erikson, IYC, p. 163.

[7] Erikson, IR, p. 130.

[8] Erikson, IYC, p. 47.

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have been." The ego process cannot change the particular structure and options which this society has presented to the individual. Even if the ego rebels against the society, it will rebel against the unique elements which are a part of his life for having lived in that social interaction. That particular set of problems is part of the "given" of his life.

This is the basis for Erikson's use of the term "sociogenetic evolution."[1] A genetic evolution of man's physiological characteristics is generally accepted. Social evolution is quite a different matter. Erikson did not use the term when that chapter was reprinted five years later.[2] He substituted instead another paragraph in which he gave some indication of what he meant by that concept. The key passage is that man "has evolved with a specific life cycle fitting his kind of modified environment."[3]

The "modified environment" is evidently the one which has accrued over many generations of experience and has been modified to the form it has today. The social evolution to which Erikson refers, then, is an historical evolution developed by the interaction between generations.

The most striking part of the passage is that the specific life cycle which has evolved fits this environment. It is not the environment which was developed to fit the life cycle, but the life cycle which has evolved to fit the environment as man had come to modify it. That this is not an accidental slip of the tongue is confirmed by another essay in the same book which refers to sociogenetic evolution: "The female Soma. . .

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[1] Erik H. Erikson, Youth: Change and Challenge (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1963); republished as The Challenge of Youth (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1965), p. 1; IYC, p. 289.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 233.

[3] Ibid.

includes a mediatorship in evolution, genetic as well as sociogenetic, by which she creates in each child the somatic (sensual and sensory) basis for his physical, cultural, and individual identity."[1] According to this passage the woman, involved in the sociogenetic evolutionary pattern, actually creates the somatic basis for identity. The social environment shapes the physical aspect of life. This suggests that the particular way in which the social environment evolved over the generations also affects the way that the physical body evolved. Erikson does pursue a radical relativity.[2] Soma and polis each modify the other in a sociogenetic evolution.

Without insisting on the implications of that particular aspect of sociogenetic evolution, it is still evident that the cumulative effect of both soma and polis over generations has established the life cycle so firmly that the room left for ego to maneuver has more severe limits than the passages about the ego's mastery would first indicate. In addition to the evolutionary limits, each individual has his own specific life history -- his childhood interactions and identifications, his earlier crises and resolutions, and these, too, enter the period of identity crisis as part of the actuality in the situation.[3] They cannot be changed, and they will be ignored only at the ego's own peril.

Another interpretation of the "one and only life cycle" becomes evident. It is the unique configuration of sociogenetic evolutionary forces and childhood experiences which have converged around one particular person to make him what he is. This is the "one and only life cycle" that he has to live and work with.

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[1] "Womanhood and Inner Space," IYC, p. 289.

[2] Above, p. 196.

[3] Erikson, IYC, p. 160.

iii. Mastery and necessity. What has appeared in this massive set of limitations on the ego is just what youth fears -- the sense of historical inevitability.[1] Freud's image of the ego as the hapless rider returns.[2] Erikson, however, does not shirk the problem which has been created. He believes that the reality of necessity and the reality of choice must both be affirmed.

(a) One way he faces it, and the more explicit way, is by frankly stating the matter in the form of a paradox:

> A 'strong ego' is the psychological precondition for that freedom which has alternately been specified as the effort through which the inevitable comes to pass -- or the will to choose what is necessary.[3]
>
> The maturing individual . . . learns to accept the existential paradox of making decisions which he knows 'deep down' will be predetermined by events, because making decisions is part of the evaluative quality inherent in being alive.[4]
>
> We recognize . . . the individual's need (central to the functioning of his ego) to experience fate as something which he chose and in which he was active.[5]

"To choose what is necessary" or "to experience fate as something which he chose" is to state the paradox bluntly. Erikson insists that man needs to have a sense of mastery as well as a sense of the necessity of life.

(b) Yet, Erikson does not settle only for paradox. He also speaks of the transforming quality of the ego process: "The ego's over-all task is, in the simplest terms, to turn passive into active, that is, to screen the impositions of its counter-players (id and superego) in such a way that they become volitions."[1] The necessity of soma and polis may be received in two ways -- as inevitable forces which dominate and control a person's life or as well-rooted and vital resources which can serve as the basis for an emerging identity. To accept life's necessities in the first and more passive way is to be victimized by them and left paralyzed.[2] To accept them in the second and more active way is to experience a lively interaction between the powerful forces which have brought life to this point and the drive to give them new significance in the light of an anticipated future.

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[1] IYC, p. 247.

[2] Above, p. 278.

[3] Erikson, IR, p. 148.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 119.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 89.

These alternatives arose out of Erikson's experience as a therapist. He views psychoanalysis as a challenge to all "man-made patienthoods," that is, all the ways in which man is tempted to resign himself to the inevitabilities of life.[3] When commenting on the problem of how the distinction can be made between a person who can benefit from therapy and a person whose creative sensibilities will be blunted by therapy, Erikson proposes that a simple test be made: does the person seem "to have" a neurosis in the midst of life's complex interactions, or does he seem to "be had" by his neurosis in those complexities?[4] The person who is the passive victim of life's necessities would find therapy an opportunity to gain a more active relationship to them.

Erikson does not find this more active role of the ego to be incompatible with the evolutionary process. Evolution provides man with a heritage as well as a necessity.[5] Whatever the dynamics of the forces of

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 219 and 171.

[2] Erikson, IR, p. 165.

[3] Erikson, IR, p. 107.

[4] Erikson, IYC, p. 249.

[5] Erikson, The Challenge of Youth, p. 3.

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evolution, what has resulted from this process has been man with a life cycle which provides him with "adaptive strengths."[1] This life cycle includes within itself potentialities for transcending life's inevitabilities. The psychosocial strength of autonomy which emerges in the second stage is the most outstanding example. However, there is an element of this transcendence in every stage from the potential for hope in the first through to the development of fidelity during the adolescent stage[2] and on to wisdom in the last. An important feature of the evolved life cycle is that it establishes "the potential of an ever-renewed vital adaptation."[3] Man, as he has evolved, has the capacity to change.

This capacity to change can be viewed on the broad scale of evolutionary development as well as in the lives of individuals. The same paragraph which states that "man has evolved with a specific life cycle" also says that "man is the creature who . . . is apt to readjust himself and his environments according to his own inventions."[4] The social environment which has developed over the generations has not been only a matter of blind fate. Man has not been merely a passive recipient, a victim of his evolution; he has been a participant in it.

Once again the model of mutual activation emerges as a helpful one. Man does not manufacture his own identity willy-nilly, according to the whim of a moment. Any adequate identity will be thoroughly rooted in the cumulative strength of soma and polis. Ego does not act as some superior power

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[1] Erikson, IR, p. 142.

[2] Erikson, The Challenge of Youth, p. 1.

[3] Erikson, IYC, p. 233.

[4] Ibid.

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which is above the others manipulating them as it pleases. It is not like the cook selecting a few ingredients of soma here and a few of polis there. Instead, ego is itself one of the ingredients in the mix.

On the other hand, neither is identity formation the inevitable result of the unyielding past. Those forces are present and active in that unconscious galaxy of interaction. Along with them, however, is an active drive. That is the drive to take hold of these forces, to make some sense of them, and to screen their conflicting demands so that a unique, integrated, future-oriented and whole configuration may emerge from the interaction.[1] That drive, according to Erikson, belongs inherently in that galaxy of interacting forces which are working on man's unconscious level to shape his identity. It is a sense of mastery which is exercised not as the dominating force in the galaxy but as one of the vital forces without which the galaxy would be incomplete.

The way this works itself out on a more conscious level can serve as a paradigm for the total process. As youth first come to a historical consciousness, they become aware of the irreversibility of significant events. They resent the weight of history as something imposed on them, a force which threatens to determine their lives in spite of themselves.[2] If they experience history only in this passive way, they will be paralyzed, the victims of history's inevitabilities. The first step toward mastery is to accept these historical necessities.[3] This is the history which has brought them to where they are. Any one historical era can offer only a limited number of meaningful options,[1] and this is the particular set for this time. These are the resources they have to work with and make something out of. Then history is transformed from an oppressive burden to a lively resource out of which an identity can be shaped.[2] An interaction ensues which does not deny the great force of history. Neither, however, does that interaction deny the individual's drive for the resolution of a new synthesis appropriate for him and his future. Then the "one and only life cycle" will be that unique one which is the culmination of a vital interaction between the predetermined potentialities, the responsive social environment, and the drive toward an integrated and whole identity.[3]

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[1] Erikson, YML, p. 217.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 247.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 74.

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The dynamics of symbolic formation suggested here is that there is a mysterious, creative force with which man is gifted which presses for new and appropriate symbols. However, this is not a domineering power which invents or manufactures symbols at will. Instead, symbols emerge out of an interplay which includes this force but also includes all those powerful elements which initiated the crisis and which must also be satisfied -- physiological and social and instinctual. Symbols which take shape in such a milieu point both to the past and to the future.

3. Fidelity in the ego process

One of the important issues involved in the subject of symbolic formation is this: what is it that makes some symbols stronger than others" What are the criteria for measuring which symbols are effective? Erikson's emphasis on the role of fidelity in the ego process makes some interesting contributions to this issue.

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 53.

[2] Erikson, YML, p. 254.

[3] "Autobiographic Notes on the Identity Crisis," p. 732.

a. Fidelity as virtue. As indicated in Figure 8[1] fidelity is the virtue which Erikson sees as emerging from the identity crisis.[2] He defines fidelity as "the ability to sustain loyalties freely pledged" in spite of the contradictions and ambiguities with which men must live.[3] This capacity is the mark of a mature person who has come through the crisis of adolescence.[4]

The adult is required to make commitments which are possible only to the person who can practice fidelity. The next stage of life is that of intimacy, which usually includes marriage in this culture. The devotion required for such commitments must have been developed during adolescence.[5]

b. Fidelity through personal interaction. Such a personal strength does not magically appear. Although it is a potential that is held within the epigenetic life cycle, the capacity is developed in the young person only as others have practiced fidelity in their relationships with him.[6] Consequently, the adolescent who has not known anyone who has been willing to "be true to" him cannot find the strength to engage in the risk of fidelity himself.[7] Dora, a patient of Freud, stands out as a demonstration of this. Having endured a lifetime of infidelities at the hands of those closest to her, she finds it difficult to exercise fidelity herself.[1]

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[1] Above, p. 228.

[2] By a "virtue" Erikson does not mean some ideal to be striven after but rather the specific personal strength that develops when the crisis of a particular stage is worked through satisfactorily. IR, p. 113. Above, p. 229.

[3] Erikson, IR, p. 125.

[4] Erikson, IYC, p. 248.

[5] Erikson, CS, p. 263.

[6] Erikson, IYC, pp. 224 and 235.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 252.

c. Fidelity insisted upon by youth. As a child with a dietary deficiency will often crave the foods that will supply the need, so the adolescent craves for fidelity. Not only does he look for somebody to whom he can be true,[2] he also searches out people whom he can trust to be true to him. Dora, the patient of Freud cited above, was compelled to test just how straight-forward Freud would be with her in the therapy. She needed someone reliable and trustworthy if she were to survive, and that literally because she had left a suicide note.[3]

In this connection the list of people whom Erikson suggests as the type of people who might be selected by youth as heroes or leaders is interesting. They are the advocates and practitioners . . .

- of technical accuracy
- of a method of scientific inquiry
- of a convincing rendition of truth
- of a code of fairness
- of a standard of artistic veracity
- of a way of personal genuineness.[4]

Everyone of those represents a considerable degree of accuracy and trustworthiness. Often the content of what they have to offer is not so important as the way in which they communicate a sense of fidelity through their message -- whatever it is.

A similar drive toward fidelity is reflected in their concern for "high fidelity" reproduction of sound, a tireless insistence on historical veracity, and a ruthless adherence to the rules of the game (as in parliamentary procedure).[1] With similar rigor they continually test each other's capacity for sustaining loyalties.[2]

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[1] Ibid., p. 250.

[2] Ibid., p. 235.

[3] Ibid., pp. 250 and 252.

[4] Erikson, IYC, p. 248.

This means that youth is especially sensitive about the hypocrisy of society and of adults. Older people may be able to rationalize such weakness in themselves and others as part of the ambiguity of life, but for young people there is too much at stake. They cannot afford to tolerate such two-facedness, so they have particularly keen antennae for detecting the first symptoms of hypocrisy. Holden Caulfield is a twentieth century example of the youth who could not bear "phoniness."[3] Erikson uses Hamlet as another. He observes that already before Shakespeare's time he was regarded as a character who insisted on the truth without deviation.[4] That makes the theme doubly significant in the Shakespearean version of Hamlet. It is the "old fool," Polonius, Erikson contends, who brings into focus the central theme of Hamlet's passion for fidelity in his line: "To thine own self be true . . . . Thou canst not then be false to any man." Hamlet himself accentuates his insistence on penetrating the layers of pretence when he shouts: "Seems, madame! Nay, it is; I know not 'seems.'"[5]

d. Fidelity in identity formation. This awareness of youth about matters of fidelity is so acute that it must point to the deepest aspects of their crisis. Upon reflection, it seems to be related to the issue of how the various elements in the identity process engage one another. Why is one particular image selected as promising in the search for identity rather than another? By what criteria are various images and proto-identities tested? What makes any element in the crisis give strength and support to an image? What makes one particular image "work" while another doesn't?

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[1] Ibid., p. 235.

[2] Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis, p. 133.

[3] J. D. Salinger, The Catcher in the Rye (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1953).

[4] Erikson, IYC, p. 238.

[5] Ibid., p. 239.

What is suggested by the adolescent preoccupation with fidelity is that this is the key to the way that any emerging identity configuration must relate to the various elements which need to be synthesized. Does the proto-identity "ring true" with the various elements with which it interacts?

If this is the case, then there is no external criteria by which the adequacy of the identity configuration for a particular person can be judged. Each person has a unique group of elements -- identifications, resolutions from earlier crises, societal roles, personal relations, physiological needs, etc. -- which the identity synthesis must satisfy. Conceivably, there may be a number of different identity patterns which could provide an adequate synthesis. However, the criterion for any of them would be how adequate they are in faithfully resonating with the various elements participating in the interaction.

This would account also for the vulnerability of adolescence. The person engaged in this process has no advance guarantees of the adequacy of any configuration. He has no "objective" or external criteria by which he can tell how he is doing. His ultimate appeal in this process is that a particular sense of identity seems to "fit." It feels right. It rings true. In one passage Erikson speaks of "psychosocial fittedness" as the means of verification in the ego process.[1] That is probably as close as one

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 161.

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can come to a criterion for a workable sense of identity. If that is the case, then the passion for fidelity would be entirely appropriate for a person engaged in the process.

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This is the quality which gives a symbol its strength. What makes a symbol multivalent is that it "rings true" as it engages a whole variety of levels of human experience. Because it does so it has sufficient strength and vitality and interest to offer a sense of meaning and integrity in the vicissitudes of human experience.

Erikson gives a demonstration of how the central symbol of Lutheranism, "The just shall live by faith," resonated with such fidelity in the experience of Luther, especially in his tower experience. Luther had been developing lectures on the Psalms. Psalm 31 had already pointed in the direction of the breakthrough which was about to come. The symbol was taking shape then. When he came to Psalm 77, the symbol found its culmination. Twice he repeated "The just shall live by faith." About twenty years later, during one of his table talks, Luther indicated that this revelation had come to him while he was on the toilet. No matter how that particular experience is interpreted, it is clear that the symbol revealed to Luther there had "connections" to many elements involved in his personal crisis. The symbol resonated with the conversations which Luther had with his Father Confessor, Staupitz, and that experience declared that the new symbol was true to that relationship.[1] The complex and ambiguous ties with his father were evoked once more, and that element of his life announced that the new symbol was faithful to the image of a true father which had come from that relationship.[1] The early memories of his mother, diffuse and yet all-pervasive, had said, "Yes, that's the way it is."[2] The writings of Augustine, so deeply imbedded in his psyche by then, declared that this rings true for them.[3] Even (especially?) his bowels responded with an "Amen."[4] The symbol which evoked such responses from his own experience was also recognized as "something that seemed right" to many other people in his time.[5]

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[1] Erikson, YML, pp. 166 and 167.

Immediately, it is evident that each of the elements involved in giving vitality to that symbol was characterized in a "personalized" way. It was as though each responded to give a personal testimony to the fidelity of the emerging symbol. That seems to be the most appropriate way of expressing the quality of relation between the symbol and the various elements which contribute to its strength.

It has become evident that this is the same quality identified in Chapter VI as "personal recognition."[6] Once again an analogy from personal relationships is most appropriate for an understanding of the crucial contact made between symbols and the elements of human experience with which they interact.

One further implication of this aspect of the dynamics is that no symbol can be adequately measured in terms of another symbol. Each has its own integrity and its own set of relations. Similarly, each of the elements which contributesto the shaping of a symbol has its own "reasons" for verifying a symbol. Another element in another situation will have quite a different basis for supporting the validity of a symbol. When his father doubted the credulity of Luther's calling, for example, there was no "objective" criteria to which he could appeal. He could only be scrupulously honest about his own confession[1] and the way he expressed his experience,[2] including his changes of mind.[3] His only hope was in his fidelity to the identity which was being worked out in this crisis.

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 94-96.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 255 and 257.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 204.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 205; compare also John Osborne's "Luther."

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 224.

[6] Above, pp. 211-220.

Therefore, there can be no external criteria used to measure the expected strength of an emerging symbol or to "explain" its meaning. Any attempt to do that would do violence to the unique character of the symbol, which is the peculiar source of its strength.[4] A symbol cannot be judged by the standards of another symbol because each symbol has its own set of relations in which it must "ring true."

The analogy is established by the giving of the analogue, according to Ricoeur.[5] Every symbol has its own unique roots. The strength of the symbol will depend upon how elemental and powerful were the forces with which it resonated, how many such elements responded, to what degree it was able to tap the full energies of those sources, and to what extent it opened new and interesting possibilities in its unique configuration so that it will be able to sustain that support.

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[1] Erikson, YML, pp. 155 and 157.

[2] Ibid., p. 156.

[3] Ibid., p. 200.

[4] Erikson, GT, p. 436.

[5] Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, p. 15.

C. The Resolution of the Crisis: A Transformed Configuration Emerges

What emerges as each crisis is worked through to a satisfactory resolution is a configuration which has been transformed. "Emergence" is a fitting word to describe the resolution of the crisis as it is related to the process by which it took shape.[1] "Transformation" describes the resolution of the crisis in comparison to the old configuration which was functioning when the crisis was initiated.[2]

1. Transformation

There is a continuity in configurations from one crisis to another[3] and from one generation to another.[4] Erikson demonstrates this in his extensive studies of Luther and Gandhi and in his interview with a 40-year-old man whose play configurations he had analyzed when he was 12, 13, and 14 years old in the Berkeley study. There was a continuity in the structure through those years which was recognizable to the analyst.[5]

The implication for the dynamics of the formation of the configuration is clear. It does not appear de novo out of the identity crisis. Any "new" integration will be rooted in and related to an earlier one. No individual can start over again and construct a new identity which completely ignores his past identifications. They may be changed dramatically, but they cannot simply be dropped. Similarly, the innovator does not dare to

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[1] Section "B" above, pp. 352-295.

[2] Section "A" above, pp. 233-251.

[3] Erikson, "The Human Life Cycle," Encyclopedia, p. 287; IYC, pp. 91 and 211; IR, p. 140.

[4] Erikson, "Late Adolescence," p. 78; IR, p. 96.

[5] Erikson, Godkin Lectures, I, 165-182; Below, p. 304.

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be entirely original. He can be effective only if the new integration he offers is tied in to existing imagery.[1]

Yet, while the resolution of the crisis brings forth a configuration which has a recognizable continuity with the old one, it is also genuinely new. The crisis is no mere "tempest in a teapot" where nothing crucial is at stake because after the storm blows over the person will return to what he has always been. Nor is the crisis simply an addition of the new elements, embellishing the former configuration. What emerges from the interplay of the crisis is a new combination,[2] a new and unique Gestalt,[3] which is more than the sum of all the elements which have contributed to it.

As a result, a person looks back on the old configuration which preceded the identity crisis with a smile. He still acknowledges his association with it, but he looks on it now as being too naive, too immature, and entirely too inadequate to cope with the possibilities which are now open to him. The new configuration has brought new vitality, released new energy,[4] offered new competency, opened new arenas of interaction, and provided a new type of equilibrium.[5]

To say that the new configuration has emerged as a transformation of the old is to emphasize both that it is a recognizable continuation of the earliest form and could not have developed without it and also that the new has its own distinctive character and is not simply a repetition of the old.

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[1] Erikson, CS, p. 144.

[2] Erikson, IR, p. 90.

[3] Erikson, IYC, p. 158.

[4] Godkin Lectures, II, 223; IYC, p. 194.

[5] "Identity," Encyclopedia, p. 65; IR, p. 75; CS, p. 255; IYC, pp. 54, 63, 92, 115.

Accordingly, Erikson himself uses that term from time to time to characterize the relation between the old configuration and the new - between one stage of history and another,[1] between one stage in an individual's life cycle and another, between the instinctual energies and the identity configuration,[2] between the contradictory sexual and social forces and the personal style which emerges from the crisis.[3]

* * *

According to this dynamics of transformation, a symbol is not created _ex nihilo_. It is, rather, the transformation of an earlier configuration -- one which "rings true" in relation to the new forces at work while maintaining some continuity with older formulations and one which represents a transformation of both the new and the old elements into a new Gestalt. The vitality of the new symbol is evident in that it opens up new possibilities, defines new levels of competence, releases new energies, and provides a new stability for an enlarged sphere of interaction.

2. Emergence

How is the appearance of the resolution of the crisis best portrayed in the light of the ego process out of which it comes?

It has not come into being as the inevitable consequences of the forces of necessity. It comes as no _deus ex machina_ resolution of irresolvable contradictions because it is integrally related to the forces which initiated the crisis in the first place. It has not been contrived or manufactured because it is deeply rooted in the unconscious processes and embedded in a lifetime, even in a sequence of generations, of critical interactions.

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[1] Erikson, YML, p. 256.

[2] _Ibid._, p. 254.

[3] Erikson, IYC, p. 283.

To say instead that the transformed configuration emerges fits the ego process of mutual activation out of which the new configuration comes. Out of the interaction between the old configurations, the new forces which precipitated the crisis, and the pressure toward integration emerges an identity configuration. Glimpses of the new Gestalt spring into view from time to time until it develops into a figure of greater stability and settledness.[1]

"Emerging" also includes a sense of rising. The new configuration is not merely a compromise between a number of conflicting elements. It is, instead, the type of result which Gandhi hoped would come from the strife at Ahmedabad -- one in which all of the participants would rise to a new level of understanding.[2] Each new configuration rises to a new level of integration.

* * *

Symbols, according to this dynamic, emerge out of a complex interaction between older symbolic resolutions, the new forces which set the crisis in motion, and a pressure toward synthesis. The process is a dynamic one, so that the symbol which emerges from that interaction is always something of a surprise even though its connection with the various elements in the process can be discerned. The new symbol could not have been predicted. Neither could it be imported from outside the crisis and imposed upon the situation as an arbitrary resolution. Its rise to a new level of integration comes out of the process itself.

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 54.

[2] Erikson, IR, p. 239.

When a symbol has developed out of the dynamic interaction of a crisis, it emerges in such a way that there is, on the one hand, a sense that it is deeply rooted in the inner recesses of one's own being, and, on the other hand, a sense of experiencing something fresh and new which came almost as a gift. The dynamic described here allows for both of those important ways of understanding symbols.

Epilogue. Identity as the Model for the Symbol

The value of working through the dynamics of the identity crisis so carefully becomes particularly significant when the close affinity between identity and symbol is recognized.

Earlier in this study there was great reluctance to identify symbols with configurations too quickly.[1] While configurations gave evidence of the crucial symbolic functions of form-giving,[2] of life-orientation,[3] and of multivalence,[4] they did not necessarily have the rich texture of multivalence required of a symbol, they were often only individual and not social in their effectiveness, and they were frequently hidden rather than consciously held.

In the case of identity configurations, they would need to exercise considerable multivalence. However, they are more frequently understood in individual rather than cultural terms and are often functioning without the person having a conscious sense of what that configuration is. Even these configurations, therefore, cannot be automatically identified as symbols.

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[1] Above, pp. 153-156.

[2] Above, pp. 119-123.

[3] Above, pp. 123-134.

[4] Above, pp. 134-152.

There are, however, some specific instances in which it is possible to establish a very close correlation between identity configurations and symbols. They are to be found in the two major biographical studies of Erikson -- of Luther and of Gandhi. Each of them deals with a configuration which is readily recognized as a symbol. The Luther study culminates in the central Lutheran symbol, referred to just a few pages ago,[1] and the Gandhi study focuses on Satyagraha, a symbol which Erikson himself identified as a "creative ritualization."[2] These two meet all the requirements of symbols.

What is of particular interest for the purposes of this chapter is that Erikson demonstrates how the transformation process of both of these symbols involved both personal and historical events. In the realm of personal events the emergence of those symbols was intimately linked to the formation of the identity of the charismatic people through whom they were developed. The historical events give evidence that not only the one key person in each instance found significance in this symbolic frame of reference, but a great many other people, presumably because of similar dynamics of resonance, found similar meaning there.

In these instances, the dynamics by which a symbol came into its own is clearly connected to the dynamics of the identity formation of Luther and of Gandhi. Therefore, to inquire into the roots of those symbols is to inquire into the crises of those men. In tracing the dynamics of their lives, of their interaction with the historical processes of their times, and of the reciprocity between them and the people around them, Erikson has, in effect, given a rather explicit account of the dynamics by which these symbols have

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[1] Above, pp. 293-295.

[2] Erikson, ORM, p. 349.

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been formed. These are the interactions which have been carefully traced in this chapter.

Since this development in the case of Luther has just recently been sketched here,[1] the emergence of Gandhi's Satyagraha can serve as a brief illustration here. This ritual of non-violent resistance, more accurately identified as "truth force," is rooted in an older Hindu symbol of *ahimsa*.[2] This was the long-standing Hindu tradition of bringing no harm to life. However, through the crisis of Gandhi and of his times that configuration was transformed into a symbol of new vitality. Some of the elements which contributed to the initiation of the crisis and also served as resources for the symbol which would emerge at the end were: Gandhi's experience of "teasing" those in authority while he still respected them from his childhood on,[3] the ambivalent sense of his responsibility for his father and of his desire to be out from under his control, the paternalism of authority both in South Africa and in British India, and the personal restraint (*Brahmacharya*) which he exercised so that he could become the householder to a whole people.[4]

With these and many other deeply rooted elements involved in the dynamics Gandhi followed a process of testing and improvisation, not sure himself where it would lead.[5] Especially in South Africa there were starts and stops, stutterings and sputterings and stumblings as well as unexpected discoveries of resources and patterns which could not have been guessed in

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[1] Above, pp. 293-295.

[2] Erikson, GT, p. 412.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 205, 216, and 208.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 194, 374, and 400.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 199-204.

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advance. (The oratorical facility of the Tamil women is one example.)[1] The prototype of the Satyagraha symbol was taking shape in Gandhi's South Africa activities. It resonated with the long-suffering and the pride of the Indian population there in a unique way until the Great March to Transvaal in 1913 brought all the forces into one great ritualistic act. It resonated even in the heritage of their "adversaries," whose memory of the Boer Trek was embedded in their own identity.[2]

The symbol was powerful because it was rooted in an old and somewhat tarnished symbol and because it drew strength from the very forces which precipitated the crisis. It "rang true" in the personal history of Gandhi -- in his early relationships with his parents and his early identifications. It touched with fidelity the economic and political realities of that era in history. It "fitted" his large sense of householdership. What else could be the measure of the vitality of this symbol? By what criteria could its effectiveness be guaranteed? Its power was its capacity to resonate with the powerful forces at work, to strike the spark of "recognition" in those forces, and to open new levels of possibility for them. It emerged as a symbol because of its capacity to evoke new vitality and to give a more adequate sense of significance to human experience.

Patience has been rewarded. By taking the time to explore the dynamics of Erikson's configurations it has been possible to draw on the full range of those dynamics to understand the formation of symbols. Now it has become possible to see the close affinity those dynamics have, even in the work of Erikson, for the transformational emergence of new symbols.

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[1] _Ibid._, p. 211.

[2] _Ibid._, p. 213.

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CHAPTER VIII

"STANDING UP" AND "REACHING OUT"

A. Prologue

The dynamics described in Chapter VII were based on the interaction which Erikson describes within a crisis -- from its initiation through to its resolution. The movements which are the center of attention in this chapter are based on the general directions suggested by the total life cycle.

The validity of basing one of the dynamics on this long-term model is grounded in the assumption that there is a continuity in the configuration which persists through one crisis after another. While the old configuration is transformed through each crisis and emerges with a character which could not have been predicted in advance, that old configuration is still recognizable.

Erikson speaks of "the ever-new configuration that is the growing personality."[1] That phrase keeps a careful balance between the repeated transformations which make the configuration "ever-new" and the continuity of the configuration which assures increasing stability to the growing personality. It is demonstrated especially by the follow-up work which Erikson did on some of the children who built play constructions for him at the ages of 12, 13 and 14 in his Berkeley study. Decades later, when these people were in their early forties, he interviewed a number of them again. One was a man who, in his early adolescence had built play constructions portraying wild animals well-contained in cages in all three of his sessions with Erikson. Thirty years later Erikson visited him in an eastern city to which he had moved. There he had developed a remarkable reputation for his work among young people who were tempted to violence. When asked about the basis for his success he answered that the young people recognized that he had it in himself to be violent and that he had that hostility "well in hand."[1] There is a recognizable configurational continuity of wildness-under-control to be found across three decades of that man's life. In other life histories as well Erikson recognized "a theme which remained pervasive in that person's destiny."[2]

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 96.

Such research supports the fundamental assumption which underlies the dynamics described in this chapter -- the configuration of the growing personality has sufficient continuity through one crisis after another that it is appropriate to analyze the continuing formation of such a configuration throughout the life cycle and to use its dynamics as a model for symbolic formation.

The double movement suggested by an overview of the life cycle is not developed by Erikson in any detail in any of his writings. It is, instead, implicit in the total framework of the life cycle, and any analysis of these dynamics will need to be built on a study of the way the life cycle unfolds and on allusions gleaned from here and there in the writings of Erikson.

Briefly summarized, the first movement is to be discerned in the first five stages of the life cycle, culminating in identity formation, and the second in the last three stages, following identity formation.

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[1] Erikson, Godkin Lectures, I, 170.

[2] *Ibid.*, I, 168.

Each of Erikson's two major biographic studies represents one of the movements. His portrayal of Luther is of Young Man Luther and the dynamics through which his "justification by faith" was formulated. The culmination of that process is described on page 204 of the book, and less than 50 pages are left to speak of the years which followed that tower experience. The second major study focuses on Gandhi. In Gandhi's Truth it takes only 100 pages of recounting Gandhi's life experiences before he arrives at the key principle of Satyagraha. The main body of the book is then given to the unfolding of how Gandhi learns to apply this principle in specific instances, particularly in the crisis in the mills of Ahmedabad, but also in a variety of other situations.

The first movement is toward individuation, toward a person becoming his distinct self, a specific entity with his own character; the second movement is that of the person moving out into the world and risking himself there.

The first is a movement toward higher differentiation and sharper definition, and the second is a movement toward opening up the boundaries of the self.

First comes the drawing together from all the resources around and pulling them together into clear focus, and then comes the giving of the self in its relationships.

At first the primary concern is autonomy, emancipation from the symbiotic relationships which nourish the person but also threaten to smother him; after that comes the concern for generativity and caring, for moving back toward others with warmth and love.

There is a time to find one's self, a time to "come into your own," and a time to lose one's self by going "out into all the world."

Each of these movements is represented here by a fundamental motion of the human body. The first is the act of "standing up" and the second that of "reaching out."

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When it comes to describing a comparable dynamics in the formation of a symbol, there will be times when the symbol will be described in anthropomorphic terms.

One of the reasons for using such terminology is that the use of a psychosocial model means from the very beginning that this quality of interaction is appropriate for understanding the dynamics of the formation of a symbol. A similar procedure was used in the last two chapters in the use of such terms as "fidelity" and "recognition." Its appropriateness is confirmed in this chapter where the full life-span of a person serves as a model for the life-span of a symbol.

A second reason is that it is very difficult, perhaps impossible, to distinguish between the symbol-in-itself and the way that a symbol functions in relation to those whose lives are oriented by it. There is no object or act or word which is a significant symbol in and of itself. It is the way a particular image functions in the lives of people that makes it a symbol at all. From the first chapter on it has been emphasized that it is the function of these images we call symbols which is of central concern here.

Therefore, to speak here of the life-long dynamics through which a symbol develops is, in the nature of things, to speak of the way that the symbol is held in the experience of those people who are significantly related to it.

Consequently, to speak of a symbol as "standing up" is to describe an object or an act or a word which is arising in the consciousness of people. At first it is held only in dimly intuited sparks of recognition hardly discernable in the flow of experience. The development is toward a distinct and specific cultural object which stands out from the other forces of human experience. It functions powerfully in offering a unique orientation in a society.

Once the symbol has taken on a definite form in the experience of people and is offering some direction to them it takes on a different dynamic in their experience of it. Instead of rising to greater definition in their perception of it the symbol has the function of reaching out and generating new possibilities in various facets of their lives.

Both of these movements may be described as the way in which the people who are involved "hold" the symbols. On the other hand, symbols function in such a way that people have a sense of themselves "being held" by the symbols, as though the symbols were the active participants in the relationship. In either case, it is the symbol as it functions in the experience of the people for whom it is significant which is the center of attention here. In that matrix the symbol both "stands up" and "reaches out."

B. Act One: "Standing Up"

The first of these acts draws on a key image used by Erikson in his Jefferson Lecture when he describes the emergence of the new American world image in the life of Thomas Jefferson.[1] It is the act of "standing up."[2] He repeats the imagery three times -- once to portray the emergence of the new world image, once to describe the act in terms of social relations, and finally to demonstrate its inner counterparts in the ego process.

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[1] Erikson, "New Dimensions of Identity," II, 5.

[2] *Ibid.*, II, 9.

The image of standing, of course, has magnificent support from the story of Luther at the Diet of Worms with his famous, "Here I stand." Erikson does not fail to include this incident in his study of Luther.[1] He resurrects the image in his final paragraph where he describes the statue of Morelos overlooking Lake Patzcuaro near Guanajuato, Mexico. It portrays the Mexican monk turned revolutionary leader in very much the same style as traditional Luther statues -- both are standing.[2]

This act captures the movement toward individuation or differentiation which culminates in the development of a sense of identity.[3]

1. The stages of autonomy

For this aspect of the double movement Erikson does give some specific help, especially in his essay relating these early stages of the life cycle to the formation of identity.[4] He points out that each crisis in the early part of the life cycle brings an increased autonomy.[5]

a. The first stage: trust/mistrust. Birth itself, the event which initiates this stage, is the most dramatic step toward autonomy which man ever takes.

Following birth, the early part of this stage is one of passive receiving, of support, of symbiotic care. It is the "most undifferentiated" of all the stages of the life cycle.[6] The person will have to break free

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[1] Erikson, YML, p. 231.

[2] *Ibid*., p. 267.

[3] Erikson, IYC, p. 23.

[4] *Ibid*., pp. 91-135.

[5] Erikson, IR, p. 84.

[6] Erikson, IYC, p. 105.

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of this "protective rest"[1] if he is to "stand up" in the world. However, the resources for such standing are being developed during this more passive period.

It is in the second part of this stage that Erikson detects three developments which move in the direction of autonomy. One is that the infant moves from the very passive reception or incorporation of experience as it is provided for him toward more of a grasping style which "takes hold" of life. It is the time of teething, so the child can be much more aggressive in gaining his food, but this mode is evident in other body organs as well. The eyes take in the world more sharply, as do the ears. The arms can also begin to take hold of things in the environment.[2] Along with these first movements toward autonomy comes the first sense of estrangement -- that of being abandoned, as in the weaning or in the rejection that the infant experiences when he bites.[3]

A second development toward autonomy is in the infant's increasing awareness of himself as a distinct person. A third is experienced as the mother gradually turns her full attention away from the infant to other interests (conjugal intimacy or possibly a new pregnancy).[4] Already in this first stage the infant begins his first tentative motions toward autonomy.

b. The second stage: autonomy/doubt. It is not until this second stage, however, that the movement of autonomy becomes significant, and the child plays out his first emancipation from the mother.[1] This is the time when the child is first able to literally "stand up"[2] and when most societies encourage him to "stand up on his own feet."[3] Erikson supports this movement by naming this the crisis through which autonomy is developed.

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[1] Erik H. Erikson, "Psychoanalysis and the Future of Education," Psychoanalytic Quarterly, IV (January, 1935), p. 60.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 100.

[3] Erikson, CS, p. 248; IYC, p. 101.

[4] Erikson, IYC, p. 100.

The entire stage is a battle for autonomy.[4] Just as physical standing indicates autonomy, so also do the first attempts at verbalization in which the infant begins to formulate his own "position" in verbal interaction.[5] Important already to Freud was the development of the infant's control over his sphincter muscles. Particularly in societies which choose to make a great deal over toilet training, this becomes an occasion for the child to exert his own will against that of his parents. He is able to control his bowels by his free choice, and this puts him in a position to make the most of the "test of wills" which can ensue.[6]

There is, of course, the corresponding estrangement to accompany this new level of autonomy. The courage to stand up to others bears a corresponding doubt about one's capacity to sustain it and a fear of being caught out on a limb. So the child, feeling ambiguous about his new possibilities, alternates between snuggling up to his mother and pushing her away, between hoarding and discarding.[7]

Through it all he comes to his first delineation of the world as "I"

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 114.

[2] Ibid., p. 108.

[3] Erikson, CS, p. 252.

[4] Erikson, IYC, p. 108.

[5] Ibid., p. 107.

[6] Ibid., p. 109.

[7] Ibid., p. 109.

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and "You," an important step toward autonomy.[1] So this stage in one sense epitomizes the general direction which is followed during all of the first give stages of life. In it the individual first gives evidence of the courage to "choose and guide his own future,"[2] and to a great extent the identity crisis of adolescence is a revival of this earlier struggle.

c. The third stage: initiative/guilt. If the second stage was the time that the child could first stand up, then the third stage is the time when he can walk and run independently and vigorously.[3] It represents, correspondingly, a new level of independence. The stage of autonomy had more of a quality of defiance or protestation, whereas this new stage of walking and running carries more of a sense of undertaking and moving out.[4] Erikson names it the stage of initiative.

The increased locomotor capacity is accompanied by a much better facility for language. The child repeatedly and annoyingly continues to probe the world with question upon question. These two expanded capacities, in turn, make possible a considerable extension of his range of imagination. This initiates his experience of positing various alternatives, a process which becomes particularly significant in adolescence.[5]

All three of these new potentialities converge to suggest an "intrusive" modality in the child's style of action. He intrudes into new space by his vigorous locomotion, into other people's ears with his incessant questioning, into unknown spheres with his imaginative curiosity, and even into the bodies of others by physical attack.[1]

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[1] Ibid., p. 108.

[2] Ibid., p. 114.

[3] Erikson, CS, p. 86.

[4] Ibid., p. 255.

[5] Above, pp. 263 and 264.

This is, of course, the phallic stage in Freud's model, and especially for males, the forces of infantile sexuality support this intrusive modality.[2] Observations made in primitive societies of acts of intercourse between children who are three or four years old, performed in a playful and imitative manner, tend to confirm Freud's proposal.[3]

Erikson occasionally refers to this as the play stage.[4] It is the time when a child can construct his own trial universe, when he can first engage in the play-acting and role-taking which will be particularly helpful to him as he moves further toward an autonomous identity. His arena of play also enlarges during this stage because the child moves beyond the family for the roles and the interplay.[5]

In all these ways new dimensions of independence have emerged during this third stage. The developing configuration is increasingly "standing up" to its environment; it is becoming more clearly delineated and is ready to move on to even higher levels of differentiation.

c. The fourth stage: industry/inferiority. Another dimension of autonomy develops in this fourth stage. Autonomy in the earlier stages is seen primarily in terms of relationships to other persons. Already during those stages, of course, the child has been developing in his capacity to be independent in relation to things as well as to people.

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[1] Erikson, CS, p. 87; IYC, p. 116.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 116.

[3] Erikson, CS, p. 86.

[4] Erikson, IR, pp. 120-22.

[5] Erikson, IYC, pp. 116 and 121; CS, p. 259; IR, p. 121.

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This becomes especially evident during the fourth stage, a time comparable to the latency period in psychoanalytic terms. During these years the child senses himself less dominated by the world of things -- of technology, production, and tools. (Literacy tools are the most fundamental in contemporary Western societies.) He begins to gain some competence in mastering them.[1] Together with this new mastery comes a feeling for the division of labor and differentiated opportunity in these relationships.[2]

Both in the sense of mastery and of differentiation, then, these new developments contribute their share to the total movement toward a greater autonomy for the individual.

e. *The fifth stage: identity/identity confusion*. All of these early stages in the life cycle participate in a movement toward autonomy which reaches its culmination in this fifth stage, identity. The dynamics of this particular stage have been analyzed in careful detail in the last chapter.[3] The synthesizing aspect of this crisis is the one which is especially important in shaping a unique identity which "stands up" in its own right.[4] What remains to be emphasized here is that the configuration which Erikson portrays as emerging from the identity crisis is one which is clearly delineated,[5] one with discernable boundaries. It is "standing up" on its own feet, taking its place alongside the other identity configurations with which it has interacted.

Erikson refers to the configuration which emerges from this crisis

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 127.

[2] Erikson, CS, p. 260.

[3] Above, pp. 252-274.

[4] Erikson, IYC, p. 156; IR, p. 92; Above, pp. 267-274.

[5] Erikson, IYC, p. 167.

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as "arriving at a definition of one's identity"[1] and as allowing oneself to be identified "as a circumscribed individual."[2] The process of definition is one of clearly marking the boundaries of one's identity so that the specific shape which that identity has assumed is clear to him and to those who confirm him in that identity.

This quality of the identity configuration is supported by the alternative which Erikson offers to its formation. A failure in identity formation is called "identity confusion," which Erikson defines as a "loss of ego boundaries."[3] He originally called this failure "identity diffusion," which makes it even more evident that the identity configuration is one which, by contrast, is clearly defined.[4] Thus, the process of identity formation is one of "clarifying one's diffused self-image."[5]

Erikson frequently uses what appears to be redundant terminology to express the sense of identity. It is, says Erikson, "when the individual comes to be and feel most himself,"[6] or a time to "become himself."[7] Yet, this becomes just one more way for him to emphasize the distinctive individuality of the configuration which "stands up" to take its own place in the world, to "be himself."

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 132; See also Ibid., p. 166; IR, p. 92; "On the Sense of Inner Identity," p. 358.

[2] Erikson, IR, p. 90.

[3] Erikson, IYC, p. 205.

[4] His reason for changing terminology was to avoid a confusion with the anthropologists' use of the term to refer to the spread of cultural objects into wider areas. IYC, p. 212.

[5] Erikson, IYC, p. 132; CS, p. 262.

[6] Erikson, "Late Adolescence," p. 76.

[7] Erikson, "Identity," p. 61.

The configuration which was first submerged in an undifferentiated state, immersed completely in the forces which surround it, has now developed to a state of great clarity and high definition. Erikson has established a clear movement through the first five stages of life. What began in symbiotic union now emerges as a configuration with its own autonomy.

* * *

When Erikson's work is analyzed from this perspective, the dynamics of the first five stages of life portray a consistent movement of autonomy or of "standing up." The psychosocial dynamics of personal development are clear. Erikson, however, offers no help in transposing this dynamic into an understanding of the process by which symbols are formed. For that it is necessary to move beyond Erikson.

What is offered by Erikson, however, in the "standing up" movement of psychosocial development, is a model for the dynamics by which symbols are formed. Its resemblance to the process of "objectivization," as described by Cassirer is unmistakable. The development in Cassier's analysis also began with "a constant flux" and "undifferentiated diversity."[1] In Cassirer, too, the movement is toward a more specific and identifiable form as the process of symbolization continues until consciousness stands outside of the images of immediacy in which it had been immersed.[2] Erikson's psychosocial movement through the first five stages of life offers a model to support such a dynamics of symbolic formation. The appropriateness of using such psychosocial dynamics which culminate in identity formation as a model for symbol formation is supported by the close proximity of the two as that was demonstrated in the Epilogue of Chapter VII.[1]

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[1] Above, p. 32.

[2] Above, p. 44.

Moreover, there is a precedent for this association between the emergence of a symbol and the development of a person in the process of "individuation" as it is described in the Jungian school of psychoanalysis. The unconscious, of course, plays an important role in Jungian analysis, and it is in relation to the unconscious that both the person and the symbol are understood.

It was with reference specifically to the development of the person that Erich Neumann wrote The Origins and History of Consciousness. There he describes the early origins of human experience in these terms:

> The world is experienced as all-embracing. . . . Nothing is himself; everything is the world. The world shelters and nourishes him, while he scarcely wills and acts at all. Doing nothing, lying inert in the unconscious, merely being there in the inexhaustible twilit world, all needs effortlessly supplied by the great nourisher -- such is that early beatific state. The uroboros of the material world is life and psyche in one.[2]

Man begins immersed in the totality of life and experience, submerged in the surroundings which continue to flow about him and sustain him in a way that is not entirely different from the life of the fetus suspended in the fluid of the womb.

The development portrayed by Erikson similarly begins with the infant time of undifferentiated experience and of protective rest.[3]

The process of individuation is one of emerging from such a symbiotic existence into a distinct identity which is specifically one's own. This movement is described by Neumann in a Maori myth regarding creation. Rangi

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[1] Above, pp. 300-303.

[2] Erich Neumann, The Origins and History of Consciousness, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton, New York: Princeton University Press, 1954 and 1970), p. 15.

[3] Above, pp. 309 and 310.

(father) and Papa (mother) had begotten all beings -- gods, men, and things; but darkness persisted on the earth because the two still clung together. After many attempts to separate them,

> Tane-mahuta . . . firmly planted his head on his mother Papa, the earth, and his feet he raised up against his father Rangi, the sky; he strained his back and his limbs in a mighty effort. Now were rent apart Rangi and Papa, and with reproaches and groans of woe they cried aloud: 'Wherefore do you thus slay your parents? Why commit so dark a crime as to slay us, to rend us, your parents, apart?' But Tane-mahuta paused not; he regarded not their cries and their groans; far, far beneath him he pressed down Papa, the earth; far, far above him he thrust up Rangi, the sky. Hence, the saying of old time, ' . . . They were rent apart, and darkness was made manifest."[1]

It is the story of every man and may even be the story of the race. In the analysis of Erikson's first five stages, this is the process which was found to be continously at work. Every person, like Tane-mahuta, presses out a space for himself. In the first stage it is against Papa, the mother; in the second stage against Rangi, the father, and in the third stage it is against the Oedipal complex of the two of them.

A contemporary version of the Maori myth is found in Ken Kesey's One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest. Big Chief Bromden had come to the point where most of his time was spent in "the fog." The arrival of Randle P. McMurphy in the ward stirs new possibilities in him and makes it possible for him to think of "standing tall" once again. By the end of the novel the fog is dispelled, and he leaves the hospital as his own man.[2]

This process of the individuation of a man, according to the Jungian approach becomes possible as the conscious aspect of his person becomes aware of elemental forces of the unconscious which compose the largest portion of his total self. It is through symbols that he becomes aware of those forces. As they take a definite form in a dream, a fantasy, an event, or a story, the person can recognize them, become conscious of them, and incorporate them in his self-understanding and his decisions.

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[1] Johannes C. Anderson, Myths and Legends of the Polynesians (London: George C. Harrapand Co., Ltd., 1928), cited by Neumann, op. cit., p. 103.

[2] Ken Kesey, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (New York: New American Library, 1962), p. 272.

It is as the symbol of the animus or the anima, the shadow or the mandala, the child or the hero, appears that the person can become aware of the specific nature of those powerful forces of the unconscious and come to terms with them. Through the symbols he comes in touch with the deeper aspects of his unique Self and becomes an individual. The symbols orient him toward the full possibilities of his own person. In the symbols what had been only vaguely suspicioned or even feared now becomes open so that he can come to terms with it. The emergence of the individuated person out of the flux and flow of his total experience coincides, according to Jung, with the emergence of the symbols from the undifferentiated unconscious to give a definite form and structure to the phantasmagoric well which lies below the surface.

Erikson, like Jung, recognizes the deep roots which symbols have in the substrata of man's unconscious. He, too, sees the process of individuation as proceeding from diffuse and undifferentiated experience to assume an identifiable shape. However, the way in which he sees that happening is quite different from the dynamics suggested by Jungian analysis. A study of the progression of relationships in Erikson's model will provide additional resources for understanding the distinct contribution which Erikson makes to this movement of "standing up."

2. Relationships and autonomy

The movement toward autonomy can be traced not only in terms of the epigenetic stages but also in the changes in the quality of relationships which the individual experiences between infancy and adolescence. Here, too, the movement is toward greater differentiation.[1] In speaking of relationships it can probably more appropriately be called a movement toward individuation. Erikson proposes three steps in a person's growth toward "ever more mature interplay."[2] These steps will provide the basis for tracing the movement in terms of the quality of personal relationships. A variation of the Latin root word, *identi*, will be used for each of those steps.

a. *Identicality*. In the beginning there is no discernable individuation, no evidence of differentiation in the infant's sense of himself. So far as we can tell the infant has no sense of being a distinct self in the world. His whole being is still identical with the world and undifferentiated from it.[3]

Erikson actually uses the word "introjection" to name this first step and proceeds immediately to clarify that what he means by that term is "the primitive 'incorporation' of another's image."[4] "Primitive incorporation," particularly in this context, suggests the same type of relationship as that mentioned above. The infant seems to have no sense of being separated from what is around him. His mother is his world; his world is his "self."

It is comparable to "symbiotic union," a metaphor which Erich Fromm takes from prenatal life to describe a relationship in which the existence of one person is entirely dependent upon the other and in which there is no

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 23.

[2] *Ibid*., p. 159.

[3] Neumann, *op. cit*., p. 6.

[4] Erikson, IYC, p. 159.

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sense of being an independent person at all.[1] No distinct configuration at all is evident as long as the infant's individuality is entirely submerged in this type of relationship.

Psychoanalysts Ludwig Eidelberg and J. N. Palmer speak of this type of relationship as "primary identification." That is the initial oral relationship with the mother before the infant differentiates between himself and any sort of external reality.[2] They base their terminology on Freud's treatment of identification.[3] The infant is immersed in his primary relationships and cannot distinguish between himself and the world in which he lives.

Yet, it is also those same primary relationships with parents which created the possibility for individuation. Their recognition of the infant as a distinct entity in the amorphous mix of life evokes in him the first glimpses of a distinct configuration which will some day become his own.[4] It is in his interaction with them that he first exhibits "his own mind,"

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[1] Erich Fromm, The Art of Loving (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1956), pp. 18 and 19.

[2] Ludwig Eidelberg and J. N. Palmer, "Primary and Secondary Narcissism," Psychiatric Quarterly, XXXIV (1960), 480-487.

[3] Freud's most careful explication of identification is found in his 1920 essay on "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego," Standard Edition, XVIII, 105-110. He makes it possible for identification to include both the first and the second steps described here. He calls it "the earliest and original form of emotional tie," (p. 107) which makes it suitable for the first step, but he also refers to identification as a model according to which a person molds his own ego (p. 106), which allows for more highly differentiated relationships such as are included in the second step. The essay, however, is more suggestive than definitive on this matter. Later in the essay, when he is referring to a specific pathological example, he equates "identification with a [lost] object" with "introjection of it into the ego." p. 109) This indicates that Erikson, too, remains within the Freudian frame of reference when he uses the term "introjection" for one type of identification.

[4] Erikson, IYC, pp. 23 and 159.

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first in the latter part of the oral stage but especially in the stage of autonomy.

What Erikson describes in terms of contemporary primary relationships was vividly portrayed in the Maori creation myth mentioned earlier.[1] This is a clear portrayal of how the first motion toward individuation takes place in the interaction of these primary relationships. The world of the infant is still identical with them. Yet, even within that identicality he begins to make a space for himself. It is his first experience of "standing up."

b. Identification. When Erikson distinguishes identification from introjection and makes it a subsequent step in the development of the continuing configuration, it is clear that he sees this as part of the movement toward individuation.

He speaks of identification as occuring with "part aspects" of other people[2] and as interaction with representatives of roles.[3] This means that the child's sense of his existence is no longer entirely subsumed or engulfed by his relationships.

For this reason his identification is not limited to the immediate, all-pervading presence of the primary relationships. The child now sees the world beyond the family[4] and moves toward a multiplicity of identifications -- in the neighborhood and at school, with old and with young.[5]

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[1]

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 158.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 159.

[4] Erikson, CS, p. 259; IR, p. 121; IYC, p. 181.

[5] Erikson, IYC, p. 161.

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Such differentiation between one role and another demonstrates that the child is beginning to distinguish the many factors at work in his world. It indicates, too, that he is gaining in his capacity to recognize his own person as having its place in this world along with the others. Individuation becomes more apparent. These early intimations of identity formation are easily and appropriately associated with Cassirer's description of the process of increasing differentiation through which the subject and the object are distinguished.[1]

The developing configuration is beginning to "stand up" on its own. The person is not so exclusively dependent upon one or two relationships to establish his existence. A little more "distance" has been created to set himself apart as a separate entity -- with the new fears of alienation as well as the new possibilities of individuality which accompany that movement.

However, full autonomy is not yet experienced in these identifications. Each of the roles is first taken as a totality -- very much like the way that Gandhi admired Rajchandra "uncritically" and even "passionately."[2] The child is caught up in these identifications. Furthermore, since they represent "part aspects" of life, none of them is adequate to serve as the person's full identity. Identifications may serve to get the person up on one knee, but a further step is required if he is to stand up.

c. Identity. Individuation is achieved with the formation of one's identity.[3]

Identifications are still present in adolescence. In fact, some new

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[1] Above, pp. 44 and 53-59.

[2] Coles, *op. cit.*, p. 336.

[3] Erikson, CS, p. 35; cf. also IYC, p. 40, and IR, p. 147.

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identifications are added as the new crisis develops.[1] Different people become significant in the new situation.[2] New heroes[3] are called for and new leaders now become attractive to the young person in the midst of a crisis toward identity.

However, this is not simply a matter of substituting more desirable identifications for the old ones[4] although there are some old identifications which prove to be inappropriate and need to be overcome.[5] Identifications, no matter how attractive, remain inadequate for a fully individuated identity. One is "tempted," as Gorky once was,[6] to settle for that type of relationship to avoid running the risk of role confusion, a new level of estrangement.

To continue the movement of individuation to identity formation represents a new type of relationship to others. All identifications are subordinated to the new, unique Gestalt which emerges from the identity crisis.[7] The ego process which accomplishes this was already carefully described in the last chapter.[8] In comparison to the old identification relationships identity formation cannot simply imitate them uncritically but selects some[9] and repudiates others.[10] Those which are selected are transformed by the process of synthesis from which a new and unique identity emerges.[1]

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[1] Erikson, IR, p. 92.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 257.

[3] _Ibid_., p. 248.

[4] _Ibid_., p. 158.

[5] Erikson, IR, p. 173.

[6] Erikson, CS, p. 365.

[7] Erikson, IYC, p. 158.

[8] Above, pp. 252-274.

[9] Erikson, IYC, p. 248.

[10] Erikson, IYC, p. 248.

Identity is not merely an accumulation of attractive identifications.[2] Its transformation of those identifications into a new configuration with its own distinctive character gives it a higher level of differentiation. It reaches its full emancipation from its surroundings and now "stands up" on its own two feet.

The three steps toward individuation, then, represent a movement from (a) complete immersion in the relationship with another person with no space between so that one cannot discern whether there is any separation between the two or not, through (b) identification with aspects of a multiplicity of other persons each of which is accepted quite uncritically as it is offered, to (c) identity formation in which the individual comes into his own as a unique human being among others. It is the movement of "standing up," as act by which the individual "becomes himself."

* * *

One of the aspects of the dynamic of Erikson's epigenetic model is that the development takes place in continual interaction with other persons and with social structures as well as with the physiological and instinctual elements of a person's own experience. That was evident both in the consideration of the first five stages and now also in the analysis of the development of personal relationships.

While the emphasis in this section has been on how the individual moves toward a progressively greater independence from the people who surround him, this should not be interpreted as an isolation from them. There may be less dependence upon the others, but interdependence continues.

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[1] _Ibid._, p. 87.

[2] _Ibid._, p. 303.

This is, as it happens, the main point which Erikson makes in using the image of "standing up."[1] Every "standing up" is in relation to what is below and above, behind and before, to the right and to the left. There are pushes and pulls for all of those directions and combinations of them. The standing up is made possible by its relationship to the forces which surround it. (There is no "standing up" in the weightlessness of space.)

The movement, according to Erikson, is not away from such relationships but rather a movement from symbiotic relationships to reciprocal ones.

All this is a considerable contrast to the process of individuation proposed by Jung. For Jung symbols arise spontaneously out of the unconscious.[2] In other words, the complete resources for the formation of a symbol lie within the realm of the unconscious self. Since that is the case, such symbols are most likely to come to the attention of the person when he is "in a reduced intensity of consciousness."[3] Such states of semi-consciousness would include dreams, delirium, reveries, and visions. Through them a person is more likely to become aware of symbols which point to the "true self" in his unconscious.[4]

Because symbols, according to Jung's approach, are "spontaneous manifestations of the unconscious,"[5] the formation of a symbol in a person's consciousness depends almost entirely on eliminating all distractions so that a person can be in touch with this unconscious level of his being. Interaction with other persons becomes a "contamination" which prevents these symbols of the unconscious from emerging.[1] Identifications are likely to be traps deluding the person in his awareness of significant symbols.

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[1] Erikson, "New Dimensions of Identity," II, 9.

[2] The experience of wholeness, as an example, "is anticipated by the psyche in the form of spontaneous or autonomous symbols." Carl G. Jung, Aion, Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self, Trans. R. F. C. Hull, The Collected Works of C. G. Jung (2d ed., Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968), IX, Part II, 31.

[3] C. G. Jung, "The Psychology of the Child Archetype," in The Collected Works of C. G. Jung, IX, Part I, 155.

[4] C. G. Jung, "The Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious," in The Collected Works of C. G. Jung, VII, 225.

[5] Jung, "The Psychology of the Child Archetype," p. 116.

Similarly, civilization and its cultural objects (symbols in the sense of this dissertation) are more of a hindrance than an asset to the emergence of the symbols of the unconscious.[2] This concurs with Eliade's emphasis upon archetypal symbols. He, too, sees man's participation in history as a great hindrance to being aware of the archetypal symbols which bring wholeness to his life.[3]

In this view, the formation of a symbol in man's awareness moves, indeed, from the undifferentiated state of the unconscious to one of a specific and recognizable shape. However, it "stands up" out of the unconscious spontaneously when a person's conscious involvement is at a low ebb.

What is suggested by the dynamics of Erikson is that the formation of a symbol is much more complex than that. Its roots in the unconscious remain important -- critically so. Even the process of synthesis by which they come to be formed functions to a great extent on the unconscious level. Any attempt to invent or manipulate symbols denies this important source of their depth and emaciates them.

The formation of the symbol out of the undifferentiated state, however, requires a process of development and interaction, and Jung gives little help in understanding that process when he declares that the symbol

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[1] Jung, "The Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious," p. 225.

[2] Jung, Aion, p. 19.

[3] Eliade, Images and Symbols, p. 29.

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rises "spontaneously." The proposal offered here on the basis of Erikson's model is that a symbol is formed through a series of interactions on a number of levels. A new symbol, like a new person, may begin the process completely submerged in the flux of human experience, immersed in a flow of life which surrounds it, unrecognized and unidentified, indistinguishable from the plethora of images which surround it, enveloped by the dominant symbol of its era. Yet, somewhere in that milieu something new begins to take shape.

No new symbol develops outside of any historical context. The prevailing symbolic configuration is the mother in whose arms the infant symbol is first nurtured and sustained. The new symbol, as it begins to stand up and establish its own unique place in the world, is held by those who are attracted by it initially entirely within the context of the prevailing symbolic configuration.

Social institutions exercise the paternal authority. They require conformity, to be sure, but they also provoke the search for an alternative which is independent of the established symbolic structures. Other symbols -- from past history, from other cultures, from sub-cultures and counter-cultures -- interact with the developing symbol. Each makes its own contribution to the process but none dominates it except that core configuration, which is itself being adapted and molded even as it gains in the energy and influence it draws from this interaction.

Its final synthesis into a specific and identifiable shape which is unique and powerful enough so that people are caught up into its orbit comes in that cataclysmic crisis described in the previous chapter. This is the culmination of a long process of interaction involving the psychosocial development of the people who find the symbol significant, the specific

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historical era in which the development took place with its peculiar technocracy and the status of its established symbols, alternative images from the past as well as contemporaneous to its own time, etc. The process and the interaction did not distract from the emergence of an effective symbol. They were, instead, integral and necessary participants in the process. The symbol has risen from the undifferentiated level of its origin because of the capacity of all those forces involved to tap the rich wells of the unconscious and to make something of its contents.

This is demonstrated in more detail in Gandhi's Autobiography than in Erikson's treatment of the development of Satyagraha. Gandhi indicates how he drew on his own Hindu heritage, dimly perceived as it was at first. This was the symbolic configuration which served as the mother of what was to emerge.[1] The British Empire served in many ways as the paternal authority toward which he had such ambivalent feelings -- fighting for it in time of war[2] and challenging it at every other point.[3] These were both the matrix of the symbol which was to emerge and also the confining figures from which it had to break free.

Other elements, similar to identifications, were necessary for the new Satyagraha symbol to develop. Gandhi's contact with Christianity was one powerful identification,[4] and elements of it can be recognized in the symbol as it came to be defined. The same is true for Gandhi's acquaintance with Ruskin[5] and Tolstoy.[6] Erikson makes a great deal of such personal relationships as those with his childhood companion, Mehtab,[1] and with Rajchandra[2] and Gokhale,[3] who served to some extent as his gurus. The condition of Indian people both in South Africa and in their occupied homeland was the peculiar historical setting which also contributed to the shaping of Satyagraha.

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[1] Gandhi, An Autobiography, p. 276.

[2] Ibid., p. 214.

[3] Ibid., p. 456.

[4] Ibid., p. 160.

[5] Ibid., p. 298.

[6] Ibid., p. 137.

There were intimations of the teasing of authority and of the restless stirring of a troubled soul already early in the life of Gandhi. However, those early hints were hardly remarkable in the complex milieu of India. It was a complex series of interactions which led to the first hints of non-violent political action in South Africa. Even then, considerably more synthesis and shaping was required before the march to Transvaal in 1913 brought the multiplicity of interacting forces into a specific, distinguishable shape. Then it became possible to identify Satyagraha as a symbol. If the process had been interrupted short of that march, or without some event comparable to it, the symbol would never have taken shape. In this march its process of "standing up" reached its culmination. A symbol had been formed.

3. Space for autonomy

It has been impossible to avoid the imagery of space or distance in describing the movement of individuation in terms of relationships. The individual increasingly establishes a "space" between himself and those with whom he stands in relation -- from Tane-mahuta of the Maori myth who pressed out a space between Mother Earth and Father Sky to the adolescent who gains

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[1] Erikson, GT, pp. 133-140.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 162.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 218

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some standing space in a time of moratorium. A person requires some space to stand free.

"Spielraum" is the word that Erikson hits upon in the Godkin lectures. He builds those lectures around the sense of play, and "Spielraum" literally means "play space" or "leeway."

The play configurations which he invited children to build offer a key demonstration of such Spielraum. It was necessary to provide some space apart from the continual pressure of daily relations to make it possible for the child to develop a play construction, a configuration which would "stand up" as a distinct entity announcing itself for what it was. In this first movement, characterized by the first five stages of life, the Spielraum is the space between the individual and his environment.

At the time of the identity crisis this need for Spielraum reaches its greatest proportions because it is time for the configuration to stand up on its own, and for that it needs space. That is the reason that the moratorium to which Erikson assigns such great importance is crucial at this stage. Gandhi's moratorium in England serves as an outstanding example. He had already experienced the primary identifications of his life -- "Mother, Father, and Evil Other" (Mehtab).[1] Yet, in order to become his own man it was important for him to gain the necessary distance from all of them, and from India to England was indeed some distance! The distance was not, of course, so that he could forget them entirely but rather so that he would have sufficient space to be free to work through his own unique synthesis of these and many other identifications. Such a Spielraum can save a person from the temptation to settle for uncritical acceptance of straight identification.

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[1] Erikson, GT, p. 145.

It was the space required by Jill, who left her eastern home to go out west for a time to nurse some colts and work on the ranch.[1] Luther found such a moratorium in the monastery.[2] It provided the important distance he needed between himself and especially his father who had such great ambitions for him. The identity which Luther eventually forged was to be closely associated with his relationship with his father. It emerged, however, as a transformed image of the father whom he could not meet face to face, and that transformation could be effected only by having the necessary space from the father to stand on his own.[3] Buddha required a similar Spielraum in his pilgrimage outside of his father's estate.[4]

What all of these instances have in common is that it was necessary to establish some distance between the various forces which shaped the identity and the identity configuration itself so that the new configuration could emerge as a distinct form with its unique shape. If the identity configuration remains in close proximity to the identifications which contribute to it, there is the danger that it may become only a pallid imitation of previous configurations. The vitality and integrity of the configuration which emerges out of five stages of development is possible only when it assumes a distinctive character that is peculiarly fitting to the dynamics of interaction from which it springs.

To stand up, then, in Erikson's model, is also to stand apart. It is in the shaping of this distinctive configuration that it gains the necessary vitality to function as a form which can offer identity to the person and orient him in the world.

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[1] Erikson, IYC, pp. 130 and 131.

[2] Erikson, YML, p. 97.

[3] _Ibid._, pp. 94 and 95.

[4] Veronica Ions, _Indian Mythology_ (London: Paul Hamlyn Press, 1967), pp. 119 and 132.

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The full implications of this movement for the formation of symbols now become more evident. As a new symbol emerges it not only rises up out of the unconscious, it also stands out as a form distinctive from other symbols and from the elements involved in its development.

The symbol which emerges from a rich interplay of forces bears resemblances to many facets of its environment, but by the time it has fully developed it reaches a specific shape, a distinctive and identifiable character which is peculiarly its own. It has recognizable boundaries; it is this one and not another one. It is set apart from the forces with which it is related at a sufficient distance so that it can be viewed for what it is in itself.

This aspect of symbolic formation is often neglected because of the dangers of dogmatism which are inherent in it. Yet, unless a symbol does "stand up" and assume its own distinctive shape, it will never have sufficient strength to orient man in the world. The cross, for example, may be "foolishness" to some and "a stumbling-block" to others[1] and the seal of inquisition for a very different group of people. Yet, unless such a symbol is differentiated highly enough so that it is a definite and recognizable configuration it cannot have the specificity required to be "the power of God unto salvation for all who believe."[2]

In order to emerge with its distinctive shape the new symbol needs to establish sufficient "distance" from those forces which surround it.

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[1] 1 Cor. 1:23.

[2] Rom. 1:16.

Otherwise it will be merely a reflection of them and will lack its own capacity for integration and vitality.

Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man comes to mind, too, in this connection. The novel is almost point for point a case study of Erikson's process of identity. The narrator (a nameless as well as an invisible man) leaves his southern Negro college and the president, who remains a strong figure of identification for him, and goes to New York City. Only there can the image of the president gain perspective and be transformed until the young man begins to become his own man. Even after all the experiences in the city (including the ideology of the Brotherhood) still another moratorium is needed before an adequate synthesis can emerge, and it is vividly portrayed in the cavernous hole into which he falls away from the city at the end of the novel.[1] Such a Spielraum offers the necessary space so that the possibility of the new configuration can arise.

The experience of creative people often confirms that a new image or model arises after a certain distance has been established from the familiar patterns. It was to Europe that Thomas Wolfe retreated and from there that he was able to give shape to all the sights and sounds and feelings of his American identifications (not least with his lost father) in the first significant writing of his career.[2]

Mathematicians and scientists have described a similar dynamic in the formulation of new models in those fields. Henri Poincaré, in his highly self-conscious and detailed account of the creative process by which his discovery of new mathematical models came about, emphasizes the importance of the tough and detailed groundwork which must be done. However, there comes the time when staying too close to the equations leads to perplexity and frustration. It is important at such a time to step back from the intensive involvement with the problem and gain some distance. Once a geological excursion took him away from his routine. "The changes of travel made me forget my mathematical work."[1] It was the occasion for a breakthrough in his formulations. Some time later, working on quite a different set of problems, he reports, "disgusted with my failures, I went to spend a few days at the seaside, and thought of something else. One morning, walking on the bluff, the idea came to me. . ."[2] A third breakthrough reported by Poincaré came while he was fulfilling his military obligation and "differently occupied." In each of these instances the necessary Spielraum was required for his development of the Fuchsian functions and their relationship to non-Euclidian geometry, discoveries which shaped important new models for mathematical research.

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[1] Ellison, op. cit., pp. 427-439.

[2] Thomas Wolfe, The Story of a Novel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936).

The cultural development of a symbol requires a similar "Spielraum" in relation to the forces which surround it. Christianity was born from the womb of Judaism, but only a painful break from the very forces which shaped it made it possible for Christian symbols to emerge with the power which was peculiarly theirs.

Satyagraha is not just one more manifestation of a child's ambivalent attitudes toward his father. It is a distinctive symbolic action which is not really like any other. It stands out as a clearly defined ritual with its own unique qualities. When it was taking shape there was a sense that something new was coming into being.[1] To understand it as a purification or sacrificial ritual offers a general classification, but it does not capture the full dimensions of its power.

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[1] Henri Poincaré, "Mathematical Creation" in The Foundations of Science, translated by George Bruce Halsted (Lancaster, Pa.: The Science Press, 1946).

[2] Ibid.

It is powerful in capturing the imagination of people just because of the distinctive quality which it offers, one not duplicated in any other symbol. From the interplay between a rich diversity of elements it has emerged, not as an imitation of any of those elements, but as a symbol related to all of them and also distinct from all. Only after first coming to this specific form was it possible for Satyagraha to begin a new movement as a symbol -- reaching out into a wide variety of situations for new adaptations and applications.

This distinctive quality for each symbol stands in contrast to another aspect of Jung's understanding of symbols. Jung interprets symbols as the unconscious images of man's instincts, as "patterns of instinctual behavior."[2] For him, symbolic archetypes "are, indeed, an instinctive trend, as marked as the impulse of birds to build nests, or ants to form organized colonies. Instincts are physiological urges [which] also reveal their presence by symbolic images."[3] This supports Jung's contention that symbols rise spontaneously just as instinctive action comes spontaneously. It points, however, to another matter also. There are a limited number of such instinctual patterns. Each of them is identified, in the Jungian approach, by an archetype. Jung's great contribution is that he was able to see structural continuity in the vast range of symbols. He attempts to classify every symbol in an archetypal cluster.[4] The potency of a symbol is to be found in its capacity to evoke the instinctual energy of its archetypal group. Its strength is found in the archetypal cluster to which it belongs. Any symbol is only one of the many manifestations of an archetype.

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[1] Erikson, GT, p. 200.

[2] Jung, Aion, p. 44.

[3] Jung, Man and His Symbols, p. 69.

[4] Jung, "The Psychology of the Child Archetype," p. 122.

It must be granted that Jung provides a greater range of archetypes as referents for symbols than does Freud. Furthermore, Jung makes it a point to insist that symbols be understood in their specific form rather than as allegorical references to a narrow range of what is signified.[1] In doing so, he took one step toward recognizing the unique character of each symbol. Even so, there is a limited number of archetypal patterns to which symbols refer, and every symbol is significant primarily because it belongs to one of those patterns. Jung is more likely to be concerned, for example, with the way in which the initiation rite in a society resembles the archetypal pattern of death and rebirth[2] than with the distinctive type of initiation rite which is used in a particular society and the way in which it orients that society in a unique style of life. Erikson, on the other hand, gives more attention to the way in which the ceremonies of a tribe contribute to its peculiar orientation to the world.[3]

This is not meant to imply that Erikson's model would allow for no similarity between symbols. The epigenetic model itself suggests something comparable to Jung's archetypal instincts. However, the "standing up" movement of the developing configuration offers a model which includes not only such similarity in symbols but also the distinctive character of each symbol.

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[1] Jung, Man and His Symbols, p. 69.

[2] Ibid., pp. 130 and 131.

[3] Erikson, CS, pp. 147, 168, and 169.

Although the dynamics of symbolic formation move from fluidity and evanescence to a recognizable shape through interaction with a great many forces, there is also an aspect of that dynamic which requires the symbol to stand up on its own, apart from all those forces. Without this part of the dynamics the symbol is only a reflection of the forces which surround it and not a form with a unique character and power which are distinctly its own.

C. Interlude

The first act in the drama of a life-long configuration is characterized by a movement toward a clear definition of that configuration. The second act moves in another direction, so the interlude is the time of transition between the two. It is an appropriate place to consider the importance of moving toward the second act, and that can be demonstrated most dramatically by portraying what happens if the first movement persists without the counter-movement of the second act.

As has been emphasized the first movement is fundamental. Without it no configuration would develop. There is no wholeness or integrity without defined boundaries.[1] However, if the movement toward the delineation of those boundaries is the only one in the drama of a life-long configuration, the result will be absolute and rigid boundaries, the marks of dogmatism and totalitarianism.

1. Totalism

The possibility of totalism is rooted in the dynamics which are inherent in that first act of "standing up" and can be understood as an exaggeration of that first movement.

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 90.

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Such an exaggeration occurs, according to Erikson, because the achievement of self-definition is of such vital importance to a person. If he lives in mortal fear that he will never come to a sense of identity, he will take desperate measures to avoid that catastrophe. What is true for the individual is also evident in the life of a society in those instances when a whole society is threatened with the loss of its group identity.[1] That established identity of the group may have been simply outworn[2] or it may have resulted from technological[3] or economic circumstances.[4] Then, too, it may have developed out of the earlier stages of the individual's life cycle.[5] The result is that he feels compelled to move to an early closure of his identity. (Sometimes, too, the society confirms the adolescent prematurely in his process of identity formation and forecloses his identity for him before it has been adequately worked through.)[6]

Whatever the reason for such foreclosure, it constitutes a desperate movement toward establishing a clearly delineated configuration of identity, one with firm boundaries of which the individual can be absolutely certain.[1] He may return to early introjects[2] or to negative identities.[3] He may even prefer to become nothing, and that totally, rather than live with the anxiety of identity confusion.[4]

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[1] Erikson, CS, p. 262; IYC, p. 133.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 191.

[3] Erikson, CS, p. 262.

[4] Erikson, IYC, p. 84.

[5] Erikson describes how totalism may be related (1) to the separation from the mother and the search for an alternative total relation, (2) to the separation of the ego and the superego in the development of the conscience which calls for a total definition of what is right, or (3) in the threat of identity confusion in adolescence. IYC, pp. 82-87.

[6] Erik H. Erikson and Kai T. Erikson, "The Confirmation of the Delinquent," The Chicago Review, Winter, 1957, pp. 15-23; IYC, p. 158.

The important characteristic of such totalism is that its boundaries are fixed. It establishes an arrogantly exclusive identity configuration[5] in which the inside is very clearly distinguished from the outside. The enemies are outside. They are totally stereotyped.[6] Holy wars must be waged against those who threaten the borders.[7]

There is an element of such totality in all identity formation.[8] Sometimes it is a necessary emergency measure, required for survival. The critical question, however, is whether such a movement can be reversed once the emergency is over.[9] The possibility of such reversal lies in a satisfactory resolution of the identity crisis, following the dynamics described in the last chapter as "transformational emergence." The vitality emerging from that intricate interplay provides the possibility of the turning point toward the second movement.

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 92.

[2] Ibid., p. 179.

[3] Negative identity is establishing an identity configuration in terms of those images and persons which are regarded by the society as evil or undesirable. IYC, pp. 88 and 176.

[4] The alternatives of allness or nothingness are closely related for the person threatened with the loss of identity. Erikson cites both Hitler and Luther as examples. YML, pp. 98-125, especially p. 109.

[5] Erikson, IR, p. 226.

[6] Erikson, IYC, pp. 84 and 89.

[7] Erikson, IYC, p. 191.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Erik H. Erikson, "Totality and Identity: Psychoanalytic Observations on the Problems of Youth," in Human Development Bulletin (Chicago: The Human Development Student Organization, 1954), p. 70.

2. Pseudo-speciation

What has just been described chiefly in individual terms as totalism has its parallel on the social scale as "pseudo-speciation." It is a society's way of meeting the requirement for a clear boundary to an identity configuration.

Erikson first proposed the term "pseudo species" in an address to the Royal Society of London in 1965[1] and when Konrad Lorenz subsequently attributed the concept of "pseudo-speciation" to him, he quickly appropriated it in this form for himself[2] and has used it frequently since that time.

Erikson uses this term to describe the way that man has evolved, that is, in a number of tribes and races and nations, each of which understands itself as "the people."[3] On the one hand, this serves in a positive way to give a specific sense of identity to the members of that group.[4] All legends, myths, and rituals support this particular style of humanness. These provide an integrated imagery which brings "a simple dignity and beauty" to life.[5] They help to satisfy the need for a clear definition of identity.

On the other hand, it is that same movement toward clear definition which goes beyond the point of offering a definite identity to proposing that this is a "superior identity."[6] The group draws hard boundaries, insisting that it is the "chosen people," selected by an all-wise

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[1] Erikson, ORM, p. 340.

[2] Erikson, GT, p. 431.

[3] _Ibid_.

[4] Erikson, IYC, p. 240.

[5] Erikson, IR, p. 101.

[6] Erikson, "Insight and Freedom," p. 7.

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deity[1] through its creation, its mythological tradition, and its peculiar history.[2] The same movement toward integration which makes "simple dignity and beauty" possible can also lead to rigidity and depravity.[3]

Its distinctive sense of identity then becomes hardened into the human identity.[4] This race is understood to be the true, the genuine man. When the "distinct" identity becomes a "superior" identity, men outside the tribe or race or nation or religion become inferior creatures. They become a threat to the true humanity in times of upheaval, and the absolute line of demarcation between those who are "in" and those who are "out" is quickly used as a justification for the extermination of the "others"[5] or, at the very least, "keeping them in their place."[6] Erikson illustrates this with references to National-socialist Germany[7] and to white racism in Jefferson's day.[8]

Both totalism and pseudo-speciation, then, demonstrate the imminent danger of pursuing the first movement to the point of hard definition or closed boundaries. The disaster which hangs over the entire species with modern weapons of warfare makes the danger all the more acute today.

While it is important for a man to "stand up," that movement, carried to its extremity, bodes catastrophe.

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 298.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 41.

[3] Erikson, IR, p. 101.

[4] Erikson, ORM, p. 340.

[5] Erikson, Godkin Lectures, I, 375.

[6] Erikson, GT, p. 432.

[7] Erikson, IYC, p. 299.

[8] Erikson, "Dimensions of the New Identity," I, 9.

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Similarly, in the formation of a symbol the movement toward increasingly clear definition of the symbol is an important one. Without it the symbol could never become significant in human experience. Yet, the momentum of this vital movement can carry it beyond the point that is necessary for the symbol's adequate formulation in the consciousness of the people who hold it to the place where it is held in a brittle and rigid way. Luther's creative movement breakthrough led to the period of Lutheran orthodoxy. Marx's original insights had their period of Stalinism.

Erikson's concept of pseudo-speciation goes beyond his psychosocial model and is itself a direct description of a problem in the way that symbols-as-cultural-objects function in a society. As symbols orient a society in a particular direction, there is the inevitable temptation in that society to regard this direction as the superior one which dare not be changed and by which all other people are to measure their humanity as well. Theologically, this is known as idolatry; philosophically as absolutism; and politically as imperialism.

Those are the social effects. Translated into the effects on the symbol itself, this is the equivalent of a hardening of the symbol. It occurs when a symbol with an inadequate level of multivalence is imposed on too wide a range of human experience. In that event the symbol is not full enough to offer the rich texture necessary for a genuine integration. Its levels of multivalence are "used up" so that it no longer has the sense of rich and illuminating liveliness which it could exercise in a more limited field of influence. The situation of the symbols becomes like that of the executive who climbed the ladder of promotions until, according to the Peter Principle, he reached a level beyond his competence. Or it is like the suit of clothes that enhances the appearance of its wearer when it is a comfortable fit and allows room for movement but that chokes and confines its wearer when all the space inside has been filled with no leeway.

If the formation of the symbol is to proceed to the second movement, the symbol will need to exercise sufficient multivalence in its field of interaction so that it does not develop rigid boundaries. This may happen to symbols at all levels of multivalence. Even a symbol with relatively few valences may be adequate as long as its range of influence is not stretched beyond its capacity. It may function very well at a comparatively low level of integration. At the same time, a high level symbol with rich resonance, a high quality of recognition from elemental levels of human experience, and a wide range of life forces with which it interacts may be overloaded. That is, it may be called upon to integrate an even wider range of human experience than it is capable of stimulating adequately. Then its boundaries will be pressed to rigidity, its multivalence exhausted, and its capacity for generating new possibilities expended. In that case the process of the symbol's formation has come to a halt, and it cannot make the necessary shift to the second movement.

It is important for a symbol to "stand up," that is, to take a specific shape. However, if that shape becomes inflexible, it loses its resilience. It is time to move to the second act.

D. Act Two: "Reaching Out"

Erikson offers no body motion comparable to "standing up" which could represent this second act or movement. However, he concludes the Jefferson lectures with a brief summary of what it means to be an adult person. The adult will learn

how to take care of
what he most cares for,
what he cares to be, and
what he cares to cause to be.[1]

The last words of the lecture are: "Take care." The act of caring, the psychosocial strength which develops during the stage of generativity, can be used to characterize the movement of the configuration after identity formation. The body motion selected to represent such caring is "reaching out." Reaching is not used in the sense of grasping or controlling. Instead it carries the implication of extending or offering or giving.

If in the first movement the person was himself being built up and taking his own shape, then in the second movement he is giving of himself. If the first movement was one of standing freely, the second is one of reaching out as one who cares.

1. The stages of caring

a. Stage six: intimacy/isolation. Sexual life which comes before identity formation tends to be more self-seeking, a hungry search for identity in which each partner is trying to reach himself.[2] After the identity crisis has been satisfactorily resolved, the movement can flow in the other direction. Instead of being preoccupied with what he can receive from the union, the person is now more free to abandon himself to the relation.

Such self-abandonment is too dangerous for the person whose identity is not yet formed.[3] The fusion of love threatens an ego loss which he dare not risk.[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, II, 18; compare also GT, p. 395.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 137.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 135.

These fears as well as the self-seeking mentioned earlier are never entirely absent from sexual intimacy. However, there is a shift in the fundamental movement which comes with the development of a sense of identity. Identity gives the greatest evidence of its strength when it can take chances with itself.[2] It is capable of participating in "the generosity of intimacy."[3] Its concern now becomes that of transferring the love and care received in the earlier stages of life and directing it toward another person.[4] Intimacy is "the capacity to commit oneself to concrete affiliations and partnerships."[5]

All of these characterizations of the stage of intimacy indicate a fundamental shift in the movement of the lifelong configuration. Instead of its preoccupation with being able to "stand up" on its own feet it is now concerned with "reaching out" to commit itself to another.

b. Stage seven: generativity/stagnation. A similar "reaching out" in commitment to others characterizes also the seventh stage. The only difference is that in this stage the reaching extends even farther -- beyond the primary intimacy with a loved one -- to the children or the ideas or the productions which the person creates.[6] This is the participation in the cycle of generations which receives so much emphasis in Erikson's work.[7]

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[1] Erikson, CS, p. 263.

[2] Erikson, IR, p. 128.

[3] Erikson, IYC, p. 136.

[4] Erikson, IR, pp. 127 and 128.

[5] Erikson, CS, p. 263.

[6] Erikson, IR, p. 131; IYC, p. 138.

[7] See especially the chapter on "Human Strength and the Cycle of Generations" in IR, pp. 109-157.

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Generativity is at the center of the movement which primarily contributes to this generational interaction. It cares for what it has created and gives of itself in its "reaching out" to them. Through this cycle of generations the adults offer their accrued strength to the next generation. They offer hope, will, purpose, and competence according to their particular world-image and their specific style of relationship.[1]

This self-giving is just as "instinctual" as the self-asserting action of the early stages.[2] The adult "needs to be needed" or he will suffer from stagnation, which is the form of alienation for this stage. As he offers his caring to the next generation in a particular style, so also his caring is guided by the particular nature of the people or things for which he cares.[3]

All of this is graphically demonstrated in Erikson's study of Gandhi. It is Gandhi's role as a "householder" which runs as a theme throughout Erikson's analysis of him. He has an immediate family which is his responsibility, but from the beginning he seems to have been concerned for a larger household as well.[4] Finally, all of India became the object of his care. His vow of celibacy was not a denial of his act of caring but an affirmation that his caring was to reach beyond his immediate family to a much wider household.[5] Erikson compares this to the divine call which St. Francis received to repair God's house, which was in ruins.[6] It means extending

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[1] Erikson, IR, p. 130.

[2] Erikson, IR, p. 131.

[3] Erikson, IR, p. 138.

[4] Erikson, GT, p. 176.

[5] Ibid., p. 194.

[6] Ibid., p. 178.

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one's household and making the act of caring more inclusive.

Satyagraha was the "instrument" by which he was to "reach out" to Indians of all generations. He was continually experimenting with how this instrument could serve his people -- first in South Africa to give Indians relief from the repressive registration laws[1] and the post-indenture tax[2] and then in India itself. He used it there first among the share-cropping indigo farmers in Bihar, far from his home territory.[3] Erikson gives his greatest attention to Gandhi's use of the instrument in his home territory in the strike of the mill-workers at Ahmedabad.[4] That was only the beginning, however. He continued to exercise Satyagraha as a life-principle against British repression in the anti-sedition law[5] and the Salt Act[6] as well as against violence practiced by Indians.[7]

The aspect of Gandhi's life to which Erikson gives his attention is quite different from the aspect of Luther's life on which he concentrated. It was "young man" Luther and Gandhi as adult. Luther's search was for how he might stand up in the world. Gandhi's was for how he might reach out to the world. Luther's time of reaching out was to follow, and Gandhi had spent his share of time struggling to stand up before he could shift the movement to his labors as a householder.

c. Stage eight: integrity/despair. This outward flow extends even to the last stage, old age. While Erikson mentions that the older person is ready to defend the dignity of his own life against all threats,[1] this indicates more than a defensive protection of what life has been. Old age is regarded as the time when a person views his life with reference to "ultimate concerns" which go beyond his own identity.[2] Man's strength in this stage is to be found in "ripened wits, accumulated knowledge, and mature judgment," for all of which he is responsible to the generations to come.[3] Therefore, even in his old age, the movement is still reaching out -- toward ultimate concerns and toward the future generations. The integrity of this stage is a crucial resource enabling trust[4] and identity[5] to emerge in the generations to come.

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[1] Ibid., p. 203.

[2] Ibid., p. 206.

[3] Erikson, GT, pp. 290-295.

[4] Ibid., pp. 296-363.

[5] Ibid., pp. 385.

[6] Ibid., pp. 443-447.

[7] Ibid., p. 389.

The contrast between this second act and the first is best expressed in the prayer of St. Francis:

> Grant that I may
>   not so much seek
>   to be consoled as to console;
>   to be understood, as to understand;
>   to be loved as to love;
> for it is in giving that we receive.[6]

The shift from one movement to the other involves the lifelong configuration which maintains some continuity through all the stages of life. While that configuration moved toward sharper definition in the first five stages, establishing its distinctive character, it now moves out from itself to contribute to the world around it.

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[1] Erikson, CS, p. 268.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 140.

[3] Erikson, IR, p. 133.

[4] Erikson, CS, p. 268.

[5] Erikson, IR, p. 95.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 232.

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This is a significantly different movement also in the formation of a symbol. There is a rough correspondence in these two movements to Max Weber's distinction between charisma and routinization.

The charismatic pole, according to his approach, is the one that brings forth new and distinctive symbolic configurations. They emerge through such charismatic leaders as prophets,[1] cultural heroes,[2] and shaman.[3] Charisma can usher in an entirely new orientation to the world,[4] one which stands out as distinctively different. Weber's emphasis on the rise of charisma is entirely linked with individuals who have such a "gift of grace."[5] It is in the experience and perception of such a charismatic leader that new symbolic configurations arise.

However, in order that the new symbolic orientation can be effective its influence must extend outward. Weber uses a variety of terms to describe this movement -- routinization,[6] systematization,[7] and rationalization.[1] This is a movement in which progressively greater aspects of life become integrated by the symbol. "Redemption," to use one example, "attained a specific significance only where it expressed a systematic and rationalized 'image of the world' and represented a stand in the face of the world."[2] The dynamics of a symbol as proposed in this quotation include not only standing up "in the face of the world" to assume a distinctive shape but also reaching out in a systematic and rationalized movement to sustain and widen its influence. This outward movement is necessary if the symbol is to function in a significant way in a society.

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[1] Max Weber, The Sociology of Religion, trans. Ephraim Fischoff (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), p. 46.

[2] Max Weber, "The Sociology of Charismatic Authority," in From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology, ed. and trans. by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 245.

[3] Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization, trans. A. R. Henderson and Talcott Parsons (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947), p. 359.

[4] Ibid., p. 363.

[5] Ibid., p. 360.

[6] Ibid., p. 363.

[7] Weber, "The Social Psychology of the World Religions," in From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology, p. 280.

It is to this outward movement in the life of a symbol to which the attention is directed by the last three epigenetic stages in Erikson's life cycle. To use Erikson's term, this is the "generative" movement of the symbol.

With this movement comes a different type of interaction between the symbol and the people to whom it is significant. The image seems to be more passive during the first movement. It is being shaped by the people in whose experience it emerges. It is modified and adapted and molded as it is buffeted about by the interplay of the various forces operating in the lives of those people -- their physiological drives, their personal relations, their cultural and technological environment, and their historical era. It is their response to the emerging symbol which is of critical importance for its survival. They were the ones in whose lives came a "recognition" of the promise of the new symbol. It was in their psyches that the symbol resonated and found new impetus for its formulation.

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[1] Max Weber, Economy and Society, trans. from Wirtshaft und Gesellschaft (1925), ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Witlich (2d ed.; New York: Redminster Press, 1968), p. 809.

[2] Weber, "The Social Psychology of the World Religions," p. 280.

Once the symbol has taken a definite shape, however, and has become effective in its multivalent functions, it assumes a more active role in relation to the people for whom it is significant. In its generative movement the symbol gives shape to the consciousness of the people who hold it -- or, more accurately at this stage, are held by it. The symbol orients the perspective of people; it shapes the way they perceive and experience life; it opens new possibilities for many facets of life which were not touched by it at first, giving new amplification and new directions to them; it opens whole new fields of inquiry.

In this movement the symbol "comes of age." In the interaction of the symbol with people the interesting issue is not whether the fledgling symbol will survive and just what form it will take but rather how the symbol forms the life and experience of the people. The fascination with the symbol is not the new form it will take but the interesting possibilities it will generate.

In the first movement the formation of the symbol was influenced by the matrix of trust/mistrust which had been experienced by the people in whose lives the symbol was taking shape. In the second movement the symbol shapes the context in which trust/mistrust develop between the mother and the child.

The formed symbol takes on a life of its own. It can be "objectified."[1] That is, it can be separated from the people in whose experience it originated and transmitted to other people and be effective in orienting their lives.[2]

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[1] Parsons and Shils, Toward a General Theory of Action, p. 160.

[2] Ibid., p. 161.

This makes it even more appropriate in this movement to refer to the functions of the symbol in personalized and active terms. In its generative phase the symbol stimulates and forms and enables and orients and promises.

2. Space for caring

Erikson's emphasis on Spielraum ("play space" or "leeway") in the Godkin lectures gave greater attention to the Spielraum of adults than to that of children. Man, he insists, "is most fully human when he can play on all levels, most adult wherein he creates leeway for himself by creating leeway for those who are dependent on him or interdependent with him."[1]

There is a difference, however, in the Spielraum of adults and that of children. Children, as was indicated when Spielraum was treated in relation to the first act, need to establish a Spielraum between themselves and the forces which surround them and threaten to smother them.[2] The second act, "reaching out," requires quite a different type of space. Here the concern is not so much with defining the boundaries as with opening up those boundaries so that the person can move outward. The identity configuration of the adult has taken shape. The space it requires is not so much outside itself to protect its borders but space within itself and space in its borders to keep it open and vibrant.[3] The adult without such Spielraum is closed in, rigid and defensive. It is as true for him as the child that "the loss of leeway (Spielraum) results in a slow, inner death."[4]

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[1] Godkin Lectures, I, 358.

[2] Above, pp. 330-338.

[3] Godkin Lectures, I, 353.

[4] Godkin Lectures, II, 316.

The space within the configuration prevents it from becoming static and fixed. The space which opens up its borders allows it to flow outward in a giving to others which does not dominate or control the others but risks the clarity of its definition in the process.

In retrospect it becomes evident that it is this Spielraum which describes the difference between totalism and wholeness. A configuration with leeway within itself as well as in its borders maintains a quality of wholeness.[1] It can be both "tolerant and firm, both flexible and strong, both wise and obedient."[2]

Such openness, then, does not mean the loss of the shape which the identity had assumed. In fact, the shape is more likely to maintain its fundamental continuity when its borders are more fluid and open. Boundaries which are rigidly set are so brittle that they are subject to being cracked or broken. The identity configuration of the adult is more resilient.[3] It maintains essential patterns in the midst of changes. The space necessary for flexibility is there, but there is also a stable configuration which is held securely enough so that it does not have to be artificially and defensively protected.

The type of configuration which emerges from this movement with the space that it provides has two levels of integration. One is an essential core which is fundamental and stable and less subject to change. On another level is the integration of those essentials with a number of different aspects of life. These can provide a base for moving out to still further realms of interaction, but they are themselves subject to change.

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 81; IR, p. 92.

[2] Erikson, IR, p. 226.

[3] Ibid., p. 96.

The outer limits of such a configuration are less definite, and yet there is a fundamental shape or character to the configuration which is sustained in the dangerous movement of "reaching out." This capacity for adaptability and change gives the configuration the resiliency which is required for it to be strong and to survive.

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Weber's distinction between the charismatic leader and the process of routinization was a helpful one in clarifying the two movements which are under consideration in this chapter in terms of what that means in the life-span of a symbol. The expectation in this project is that by a careful exploration of the dynamics proposed by Erikson it will be possible to gain further insight into what Weber assumes to be a rather spontaneous rise in new orientations through charismatic figures. Similarly, in this segment of the dissertation it is expected that Erikson may be able to offer some additional understanding to the process of routinization, which Weber describes in considerable detail.

In his analysis Weber finds the first movement, the charismatic one, to be the creative side of the total process and the second movement to be more mechanistic in its quality. The second one is crucial, to be sure. Without it the new orientation introduced by a charismatic figure would make little impact on the world and soon drift off the scene. This movement is also not without its creative elements. Nevertheless, the language of Weber surely emphasizes the rather deliberate application of a creative insight which has already emerged. The new revelation is regularized into the routine of life and governance. It is rationalized into systems of laws, of hierarchies, and of discipline. It is administered by bureaucracies under regulations.

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All of this suggests that the generative movement of "reaching out" may not at all have averted the danger of totalism which was inherent in the first movement. The motion of "caring" may be smothering and dominating. It may suffocate life in the cocoon. If so, it is as threatening to life as the imperialism and self-righteousness of the over-defined symbol.

The fully regularized symbolic configuration has all its implications built in and nailed down. Every valence has been domesticated, every nuance fixed in place. When a symbol has been so routinized, it has lost the richness and promise of its multivalent powers and has degenerated into a tyranny. The free and promising multivalent dimensions which made it so interesting have been locked into rigid, dull casuistry.

The question is whether this is the inevitable result when the influence of a symbol reaches out into the various aspects of life in fulfillment of its promise.

The dynamics of Spielraum suggest an alternative. Surely, every game needs its own playing field, its own form, its distinctive boundaries. The movement in which a game is taking shape and developing these frames of reference corresponds to the first movement of symbolic formation. This type of a distinctive playing space (Spielraum) must be established in order to have a game at all.

However, the second movement calls for a different type of Spielraum. This is the leeway, the room for play, within those boundaries. There would be no game at all if every move were prescribed, every play fixed, every step determined by the rules.

The same is true in the life of a symbol. It needs to establish its own distinctive space so that it is free to function in its own frame of reference. However, it dare not function so tyrannically that there is no leeway within that space or else it will become rigid and self-defeating. The importance of this second type of Spielraum for a symbol is not a gratuitous bow to "open-mindedness." It is, rather, inherent and necessary because of the multivalent quality of a symbol that it remain open and flexible. Then the extension of the symbol to new aspects of life will not be a confinement to a specific application but instead a sampling of the type of possibility which it opens.

This means that in this second movement, where the symbol acts to shape those with whom it comes in contact and when it projects its implications on the macrosphere, the nature of its own form, as it is perceived and experienced by those involved with it, is also affected. Although the primary emphasis in this movement is on the active forming which the symbol gives to the society and the individuals involved with it, the texture of the symbol itself, as it is known in its functioning, takes on a different quality. It is more flexible and more resilient. Its boundaries are more fluid.

It may be described by personifying the actions of the symbol. Having taken a specific form it is no longer necessary for the symbol to be so self-conscious and defensive about self-preservation. It does not need to be preoccupied with fixing its own territory. The symbol has come of age. There is sufficient confidence in this stage of maturity so that it is free to explore possibilities without being threatened by failure, to suggest new directions without losing its way, and to release new energies without being overwhelmed.

Furthermore, not only is it free to "reach out" in these ways; it must do so. Unless it exercises such leeway (Spielraum) in its activity of forming, it will become rigid and crystallized. It will die of "epidermal-sclerosis." Unless it risks its life, it will lose it.

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When this same movement is described from the perspective of those people who experience the influence of the symbol, the difference in the way they relate to the symbol is the difference between "true believers" and "mature believers." It is the difference between the anxious, single-mindedness of new converts and the quiet confidence of those who are open to a wide range of possibilities suggested by the symbolic configuration. It is the difference between the period of orthodoxy of later sixteenth century Lutheranism and the fascinating explorations of Sweden's Nathan Söderblom in theology and ecumenicity. It is the difference between Luther's crochety table talks as recorded by the hangers-on and his brilliant treatises of 1520 opening new dimensions of Christian freedom.

Satyagraha offers a helpful example also in this second movement. Once it had taken shape in South Africa, it could have assumed a rigid, unyielding form. However, Gandhi himself exercised the symbolic action in a wide variety of ways -- as a strike at the textile mills in Ahmedabad, as a hartal (a day of fasting and prayer) in opposition to the Rowlatt Bill,[1] and as a march to the sea to produce salt in defiance of the Salt Act.[2]

It was picked up later by others. Martin Luther King exercised the symbol not only in terms of marches but as sit-ins, pray-ins, and swim-ins. Cesar Chavez adapted it to include secondary boycotts. Danilo Dolci made a creative adaptation in Sicily where, in defiance of Mafia-controlled local authorities, he initiated a strike-in-reverse by leading the men of the village in repairing a road by their own hands when local politicians had diverted the money designated for the project.[1]

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[1] Erikson, GT, p. 384.

[2] Ibid., pp. 443-448.

In all of these variations the fundamental symbolic form of non-violent resistance persists. Yet, it is exercised with sufficient Spielraum so that it can retain its vitality and effectiveness. Its integrity is maintained and so also is its flexibility and openness. Erikson finds still another possibility for Satyagraha as a symbol for a style of personal relationships, as will be seen in the next section.

3. Relationships and caring

The relationships which a person experiences offer some progression in the second movement just as they did in the first. There is, for example, an ever-widening circle of relationships in terms of numbers and distance. Personal relations move from sexual partner to children to succeeding generations and a world perspective in these last stages.

There is even some progression in the quality of the relationship. The caring becomes increasingly self-less as it moves from the reciprocal love at the stage of intimacy to the comparatively more one-sided giving at the stage of generativity and finally to the integrity of old age which demands nothing. - Or does the progression really move that way? There are some problems about whether parenthood is really any more self-less and whether old age is not one of the most dependent times of all.

What gives more promise in Erikson's treatment of relationships in adulthood is the exploration he makes in the area of ethics.

a. Insight and responsibility. In the psychoanalytic tradition insight leads to release from the bonds of the past, to freedom. However, this psychoanalyst declares by the title of one of his major publications that insight leads to responsibility.

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[1] Jerre G. Mangione, The World Around Danilo Dolci (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 2.

The first essay in that volume is a tribute to Freud. Within that context he makes it clear that the self-awareness associated with therapy is to be understood in terms of "a fundamentally new ethical orientation of adult man's relationship to childhood" -- his own childhood, his own children, and the children of all men.[1]

In the second essay[2] he concludes that the ethical judgments of the therapist need to be included in any genuine therapeutic work.[3]

The essay on "Human Strengths and the Cycle of Generations" is a study of the virtues associated with each of the stages of life.[4] The next essay announces that it is not enough for a person to become aware of his situation (psychological reality); he must become competent at entering into responsible interaction (historical actuality). The final chapter is on the Golden Rule, no less, and interprets it in terms of reciprocity: "Truly worthwhile acts enhance a mutuality between the doer and the other -- a mutuality which strengthens the doer even as it strengthens the other."[5] What Erikson calls for is a "heightened mutuality"[6] out of adult relationships. He has no intention of giving paternalistic interpretations to either caring or responsibility.

b. Morality and ethics. In that chapter on the Golden Rule Erikson gives his fullest treatment to the comparison between morality and

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[1] Erikson, IR, p. 44.

[2] Erikson, "The Nature of Clinical Evidence," IR, pp. 47-80.

[3] Erikson, IR, p. 73.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 109-157.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 233.

[6] Erikson, GT, p. 413.

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ethics, a distinction to which he makes brief reference in a number of other places. There is some parallel to the distinction being made here between the two fundamental movements of the full life style.

Morality is rooted in the earliest stages and relationships. Erikson understands morality as conduct based on a fear of threats,[1] on blind obedience,[2] and on restraint.[3] It is action imposed from the outside.

The first act in the life cycle is to "stand up" against such imposed regulations, and the adolescent does that as he establishes an ideology to which he is rigorously committed in contrast to the morality which he passively received. This ideology reflects his newly-discovered sense of history and universality.[4] However, ideologies make absolute demands,[5] and have all the marks of totalism unless they can be balanced by the second movement in the life cycle.

Adult ethics reflects the wholeness of an adult configuration. It is more concerned with responsibility and caring than with "rightness." The movement of "reaching out" bears the ethical strength necessary for commitment toward others.[6] Its quality is established with reference to those to whom and for whom it is responsible.[7] This is the quality of relationships

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[1] Erikson, IR, p. 222.

[2] Erikson, GT, p. 251.

[3] Erikson, IR, p. 227.

[4] *Ibid*., p. 224.

[5] Erikson, IYC, p. 191.

[6] Erikson, CS, p. 263.

[7] "As the areas of adult responsibility are gradually delineated, . . . they eventually become subject to that ethical sense which is the mark of the adult and which takes over from the ideological conviction of adolescence and the moralism of childhood." IYC, p. 136.

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required if the next generation is to have the full resources it needs for its life cycle.

Yet, adult ethics, like morality and ideology, has its dangers. They are rigid conservatism[1] and "territorial defensiveness."[2] Something else is needed to prevent adults from falling into these traps.

c. Universal ethic. Erikson's proposal is a universal ethic. His interest in such an ethic is consistent with his repeated hope for the time when man can genuinely perceive himself as one species.[3] He sees some hope that the same technology which threatens to destroy the species and to mechanize him may also provide the basis for such a vision. "The overriding issue," as Erikson views it, "is the creation not of a new ideology but of a universal ethics growing out of a universal technological civilization."[4] His appeal to such a universal ethic is based on "a high degree of rational assent."[5]

Such a grounds for a workable ethics seems odd in the context of writing which draws on the vital strengths of man, rooted in physical, social, and psychic interactions. It seems to fall into the realm of the "ideal-to-be-striven-for," a mode in which Erikson is not accustomed to dwell.

His interest in Gandhi seems closely tied with his hope for a universal ethic. At Ahmedabad all the parties involved, owners and workers, were regarded by Gandhi as members of the one species of mankind.[6] Gandhi

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[1] Erikson, IR, p. 227.

[2] Ibid., p. 226.

[3] Ibid., p. 242.

[4] Erikson, IYC, p. 260; see also IR, p. 242.

[5] Erikson, IR, p. 222.

[6] Erikson, GT, p. 434.

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did not believe that either party would gain if it would be at the expense of the other party being put down. Erikson sees in this approach the possibility of a universal ethic which points to the day when there will be "one all-human species."[1]

As he spins out the dynamics of the ethics of non-violence, what had appeared to be an ethics of "pie-in-the-sky" begins to take on a more realistic character. In the first place, the ethics of non-violence has an inward as well as an outward dimension. It is to be applied to the evil within ourselves as well as to the evil in society.[2]

In the second place, Erikson sees the importance of this ethics being "generated and regenerated in and by the sequence of generations."[3] It cannot be initiated by New Year's resolutions. The wisdom and the integrity of the old will need to play its strategic role in the on-going cycle of generations to give Gandhi's ethic the strength and profound support which it requires.

A third base to which Erikson looks in grounding this ethic of non-violence is in the examples of ritualized aggression. He points out how ritualization tempers aggression in animals and cites the antler tournament among the Damstags as one instance.[4] He suggests that, as in other areas where man must learn what animals do "naturally," here, too, is such an instance. The conventions of warfare among New Guinea tribes as portrayed in Dead Birds indicate that such a ritualization of aggression may be possible for man.[5]

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[1] Ibid., p. 413.

[2] Ibid., p. 251.

[3] Erikson, IR, p. 228.

[4] Erikson, GT, pp. 425 and 426

[5] Ibid., pp. 428 and 429.

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Finally, and most persuasively, Erikson points out that the dynamics of non-violent confrontation can bring to light insight on both sides.[1] Religion, politics, and psychoanalysis have long ago discovered and institutionalized the human strength to be found in confessing the past in order to purge it.[2] Non-violence offers a new variation to that procedure -- one by which both partners are transformed, one which promises an optimum of mutual activation between men.

In these ways Erikson establishes the basis for the Gandhian ethic in the vital interactions of the life cycle. All four of the bases are particularly appropriate for the second movement of the life cycle. The first is related to the Spielraum, the leeway which develops within the maturing identity configuration. The others all deal with a movement which is not preoccupied with establishing and defending its own boundaries but with "reaching out" toward others.

The style of that reaching out is not dominating and paternalistic. Especially the fourth point makes it clear that the one who reaches out makes himself vulnerable in the process. He is open and subject to modifications even as he creates new possibilities for others by his caring.[3] This is the quality of responsibility to which the adult is called in the second movement of his life cycle.

Erikson's distinction between morality and ethics as well as his understanding of responsibility support the contrast in the two fundamental movements of the life cycle. The movement from moralistic conformity to ideological conviction is the movement of "standing up." The young person emerges from a more passive acceptance of and resignation to the expectations of those who surround him to the point of coming to his own affirmations. They are sharpened up and brought into focus in the process.

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[1] Ibid., p. 439.

[2] Ibid., p. 438.

[3] See earlier treatment of mutual modification, pp. 193-205, and mutual activation, pp. 205-220.

The second movement is less concerned with vigorous conformity to an ideological perspective, less preoccupied with keeping the system in tact, and more inclined to move out from the center toward those who are around, more likely to be open to change, more interested in what is given than in what must be received.

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The dynamic of mature relationships, as suggested by Erikson's work, is one of reciprocity and not of domination. The dynamics of "mutual activation," described in Chapter VI, is functioning also in this second movement.

What this means for the life of a symbol is that it never reaches a stage where it stops being formed. Even in the "mature" life of the symbol, when the symbol plays an active role in integrating the experience of those for whom it is significant, the symbol itself is also being changed in the process.

The dynamics of mutual activation emphasizes that all of the elements engaged in the interplay not only contribute to one another but also are modified by each other. Now it is evident that even the symbol, which exercises great powers of formation in integrating the many aspects of human experience, is not exempt from such a reciprocity. The symbol is itself continuously being modified. Its interaction with a host of elements in the wide range of human experience results not only in offering a greater amplitude to those diverse elements but also in feeling their impact on its own form.

This modification of the symbol is not a regrettable diminution of the powerful character of the symbol. Instead, it is only in a dynamic interaction in which it is itself affected that the symbol can be vitally involved. Furthermore, appropriate modification of the symbol keeps it responsively in touch with the vital sources of life and actually contributes to its virility. Over a series of generations considerable evolutionary development may be evident in a symbol. This happens because of what happens to a symbol which is in continuous active interplay with the diverse elements in its own orbit of influence and also because of interaction with other symbolic configurations with which it interacts from time to time.

Just as the parents who reach out to care for their children are themselves changed also by their children and just as the ideology which reaches out to "claim" the young people for society is itself modified by those youth, so every symbol is vulnerable to adaptation by the very nature of its interaction with the people and the many aspects of life which it touches.

Though the rate of change is not so rapid in the second movement, it is still an important aspect of the symbol's involvement in mutual activation. The dynamics of symbolic formation continue throughout the entire life of the symbol because its form is never finalized until it reaches the time of its senility and its ultimate demise. Continuous formation and reformation is essential to its on-going life.

E. Epilogue

Finally, an important comment needs to be made about the "time" model which has been used in describing the two movements. They were deliberately and carefully isolated from one another here so that each could stand in contrast to the other. In the actual dynamics for the formation of Erikson's on-going configuration and also of cultural symbols it does not work out so that the first movement is completed entirely before the second movement begins.

There is, instead, a contrapuntal style -- a continual interaction between the two movements. This is evident in the life cycle which Erikson offers. The infant, for example, is receiving a great deal in his relationship with his mother. He is drawing from her the resources necessary to move toward autonomy. However, at the same time the infant is giving something which is very important to the mother. Already in the cradle there is a "reaching out" and not only a "standing up." Similarly, in the adult stages of life the identity configuration is being continually reshaped as a result of its interaction with a multiplicity of life forces.

Likewise, even while the symbol is initially taking shape, one of the forces which makes it appealing is its early promise of a capacity to integrate a wide variety of elements. Its capacity to "reach out" is one of the factors which enables the symbol to "stand up" as a distinctive form in human experience. On the other hand, even after the symbol has taken on a recognizable shape and begins to actively "reach out" to integrate and enliven the various aspects of life, it is continuing to be shaped itself.

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CONCLUSION

A. Significance of the Findings

1. Proposes a dynamics through which symbols are formed

In my judgment this detailed analysis of dynamics by which configurations take shape according to Erikson makes a promising proposal regarding the way in which symbols are formed. This is an important contribution for symbolic realism, an approach for which symbols are so fundamental. Not only can such a contribution give insight into the way that new symbols take shape. It can also offer some sense of what it is that gives symbols vitality and what makes some symbols more effective than others.

The dynamics proposed by Erikson is particularly rich because it draws on the full spectrum of human experience. It includes such elements as economic life, intimate personal relationships, physiology, cognition, political life, play, rituals, social organization, childhood training, geography, dream life, technology, climate, religious faith, historical change, and ideologies.

The central thrust of this project has been to glean from the work of Erikson how he portrays all of these elements interacting with each other toward the formation of a symbol. Here, in summary, are the three chief dynamics suggested for symbolic formation on the basis of Erikson's work:

a. Mutual activation. All of the elements interact with one another with no one element dominating all the others. They activate one another as they engage each other.

b. Transformational emergence. All elements converge at a critical time in a particularly dense texture of interaction. During this time some elements come to stand out more than others because they resonate more strongly with other elements. Even these stronger elements are themselves changed and synthesized by the intense interaction. Sufficient space and time is required for the testing and further adaptation of tentative configurations, and the crisis is resolved when a configuration emerges which resonates (or rings true) with enough of the elements involved to give new strength and energy to the total milieu. The new configuration is not an imitation of any one element involved in this crisis, and it is not merely the sum of all of them, but it emerges out of the critical time of interaction as a transformation of those elements which contributed to it, and as one which gives new significance to those elements.

c. 'Standing up' and 'reaching out.' On the one hand, as a developing configuration moves toward its formation, it establishes its distinctive character, progressively differentiating itself from those elements which have contributed to it. On the other hand, it also opens itself outward to engage other elements of human experience, offering them new significance and itself being modified by them.

In these three dynamics Erikson both draws on a wider variety of resources for the symbolic formation and also establishes a more highly integral relationship among those resources and the symbols which they form than any other proposal of which I am aware. This is the basis on which I regard these findings as making a significant contribution to the work of symbolic realism.

While this is the fundamental purpose of this dissertation, there are a number of other aspects to these findings. They emerged during the course of the research and offer additional insights into the functions of symbols as described in Part One and further resources for the task of symbolic realism. They deal with such issues as the possible tyranny of symbolism, the possibilities of relativity for understanding human experience, and the possibilities of a better insight into a pluralistic world.

2. Preserves symbols from becoming tyrannical

The insight that reality is constituted symbolically has great appeal because it breaks past the barriers which literal and empirical assumptions had erected. Earlier forms of "orthodoxy," whether established by religion, science, or philosophy, can be recognized as specific instances in a vast array of symbolic configurations. There is, therefore, a certain liberating spirit as symbolic realism invites man past the old limitations.

Then, too, this approach gives a sense of being in touch with the more vital elements of human existence because it gets underneath the manageable categories of rationality and verifiability to deal with what is elemental and primordial. Again, such a breakthrough gives a person a feeling of getting past some of the restrictions and limitations to which Western thought had come.

Yet, for all the promise offered by this approach, I have had a gnawing apprehension that in it may be hidden the seeds of an uncritical support of the status quo. If, as Cassirer describes it, reality has been established by a specific set of relations which has developed through such an intricate and complex process, which is rooted in such elemental dimensions of life, and which is moving toward an increasingly clear delineation, then the configuration which results is quite firmly entrenched. In addition, that specific set of relations is, by definition, the form-giving aspect of life. It establishes the reality which is experienced. There is no way to get outside of such a symbolic configuration, and there is no countervailing power to make the symbolic form more open and subject to change. What is is what is. The "one-dimensional" man described by Marcuse may be the inevitable result with no options for deliverance.

My own wrestling with this problem has been treated in a major paper on "The Tyranny of Symbols."[1] It was my conclusion at that time that the possibility for opening up the symbolic configuration was to be found only in the collision of one configuration with another.[2] According to this proposal a symbol would by its nature be resistant to change and accept it only as it was imposed by external pressure from outside. This calls for a type of "check-and'balance" system in a pluralistic setting where varieties of such configurations encounter each other.

While the main focus of this dissertation has been on how a symbol is formed, Erikson's work has implications also for what a symbol is.

This is the case for the dynamic considered in Chapter VIII ("'Standing Up' and 'Reaching Out'"). In the tentative outline proposed for this dissertation, the process described in the first half of that chapter was itself to be the entire main body of this dissertation. The movement of identity formation from its undifferentiated quality in infancy to its highly defined quality at the conclusion of the identity crisis formed a perfect parallel to Cassirer's description of the movement toward objectivization.[3] What was already apparent at that time was that Erikson's developmental dynamics could support the basic motion proposed by Cassirer,

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[1] Herman Diers, "The Tyranny of Symbols," Comprehensive Examination (Berkeley, California: Graduate Theological Union, 1972).

[2] _Ibid._, p. 43.

[3] Above, pp. 30-47.

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and it was my conviction at the time that Erikson's concern for the physiological dimension as well as for patterns of interaction in intimate relationships and in society-at-large would make for a richer understanding of this movement toward higher differentiation. I was not disappointed in that expectation.

However, in the process of working through that particular dynamic, not only did I discover a couple of other dynamics (which became Chapters VI and VII), but I also recognized a counter-movement to balance the motion toward differentiation. This insight was made possible in part by the earlier discovery that Erikson's use of "configuration" was even more fundamental for his work than "identity."[1] This opened the way to see that the symbolic pattern with which Erikson was dealing continued its process of development for a lifetime. The identity is formed by the end of adolescence, but the personal configuration continues to be "ever-new" through all eight stages. Thus, the movement toward identity-formation is only half of the story, and the counter-movement which prevails following identity formation requires similar attention if the whole process is to be understood.

This counter-movement of "reaching out" is an integral part of the dynamics of symbolic formation. A symbol is of little significance unless it generates new life and possibility. Without this movement the symbol would die a-borning. With this movement of "reaching out" it not only creates new possibilities in human experience but also opens itself up. It is subject to modification or change by the interaction. This open-endedness or fluidity is not imposed on the symbol from the outside as though it were contrary to its nature and only grudgingly granted, but is an integral part of symbolic formation.

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[1] See Chapter IV above.

Thus, the tyranny of the symbol is avoided, not by the threatening presence of other symbols but by the healthy development of the symbolic configuration which, once it has assumed its fundamental shape, is sensitive and responsive in its extension, allowing itself to be vulnerable. Only the warped configuration which has not successfully worked through the crises of its development is forced to be defensive, rigid, and totalitarian. The dynamics of transformational emergence[1] confirms that the possibilities for change are inherent in the on-going configuration.

This is not to deny that the encounter of one configuration by another also brings about changes in both of them, but it is not the fundamental basis for change.

There is no similar counter-movement in Cassirer's proposal. This reflects his assumption that symbolic formation reaches its culmination in symbols of mathematical precision.[2] These are quite different from the symbols-as-cultural-objects which are the center of attention in this dissertation and which offer orientation for human thought and action. Cassirer's single movement (process of objectivization)[3] looks upon these symbols of orientation as one stage along the way in the movement toward mathematical precision. This study makes a significant contribution beyond the Cassirer model by the introduction of this second movement. It offers to symbolic realism a theoretic base for understanding how symbols, even as they exercise their form-giving function in shaping human experience, are themselves subject to change in the process. With the introduction of this second movement it keeps these vital symbols of orientation open and dynamic without compromising their crucial form-giving function.

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[1] Above, Chapter VII.

[2] Above, p. 46.

[3] Above, pp. 26, 30, and 53.

3. Offers possibility for genuine relativity

The most exciting discovery of the project came to me relatively late in the work. "Mutual activation" was the last of the three major dynamics which I uncovered in my research, and the possibility of a genuine relativity in understanding symbolic formation came to me only after I began the detailed work on that chapter. Erikson had been selected because of his apparent capacity to bring many elements together in the development of human experience, but it took a considerable length of time of living with the materials before the full impact of the radical relativity of their relationships to one another came to me.

Erikson's call for an Einsteinian formula of relativity which would be useful in understanding human experience was clear enough. What was not so clear until later was the long way that Erikson himself had already taken toward the development of such a formula.

One of his contributions is his recognition of three major disciplines of inquiry into the life of man, each discipline with its own methodology and its own presuppositions.[1] Psychology (including psychoanalysis), social sciences, and biology all contribute to the understanding of man. The knowledge which each yields is, of course, limited by the relative position from which it views human life.[2] Each of the disciplines reveals a distinctive life process. In this dissertation I have added the process of symbolization to these three.[3] These processes are to be understood in a genuine mutuality of activation with one another, each gaining significance

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[1] Above, p. 189.

[2] Erikson, Childhood and Society, p. 37.

[3] Above, pp. 168-171.

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from the others. Erikson is not willing to make any of these processes the primary one in terms of which the others are to be interpreted.

There are, of course, difficult problems when it comes to applying this in specific situations. The current controversies regarding the methodology of psycho-historical analysis is an evidence of this. Robert Coles points out, in his criticism of Bruce Mazlish's work, In Search of Nixon: A Psychohistorical Inquiry, that such analysis can be done irresponsibly.[1] To arrive at a configuration which gives adequate attention to all the processes involved in a way which "rings true" for all and enhances the perspective of all requires exhaustive research and perceptive insight. Erikson contributes to this methodology both by specific examples of such studies and also by delineating the ego process in considerable detail. This process, by which identity is formed through selection, testing and synthesis, is analogous to the process by which configurations are discovered in research.

A second contribution by Erikson toward such a formula of relativity is that he recognizes the relativity of his own position in viewing.[2] Just because a person stands in _a_ place and not in the "center of the universe" does not mean that he stands in no place and can see nothing. With full awareness of the limitations on his perceptions, he nevertheless dares to declare what he does see. Robert Lifton, a disciple of Erikson, continued this stance in the "advocacy research" which he conducted with the Viet Nam returning veterans.[3]

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[1] Robert Coles, "Shrinking History," in The New York Review of Books, March 8, 1973, p. 27, and May 3, 1973, p. 37.

[2] Above, pp. 185-191.

[3] Robert Jay Lifton, Home from the War (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973).

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Here again, serious questions must immediately be raised. Do not Erikson's life-cycle and ego-process represent an absolute and irreducible dogmatic core for Erikson? Is such a core any less imperialistic over the various elements in the life processes than that of Freud or Marx?

A couple of responses can be made to this thorny issue. One is that Erikson rejects a relativistic view in which no significant relationships can be established. He understands relativity as having its own "lawfulness." This lawfulness has to do with the dynamics of interaction among the various elements involved in the total process. In this way the model is again comparable to that of Einstein, whose formula provides a context within which the interaction among the various forces can be understood. Erikson's proposal offers a way of discerning how the various forces involved in human life exercise a continual interplay with one another and of making this discernment in such a way that it does not violate but actually enhances the full richness of each of the forces involved. Like Einstein and Shapley, then, he is offering a model according to which all elements in the process are given full recognition.

In the second place, Erikson acknowledges that there are other ways of describing this interaction which also deserve attention.[1] His model is not offered as "a system expected to survive discarded systems, but as a bit of conceptual living both limited and enhanced by what historical relevance and consequence it may possess for a time."[2] That does not have the ring of a new type of planetary model. Even beyond that, Erikson is aware that the Heisenberg principle is working also in this level of research. The insights which he offers will themselves affect the quality of the interaction.[1]

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[1] Erikson, IR, p. 225.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 43.

Erikson seems to stand up well against the tough challenges which any proposal of relativity must face.

The contribution which is made to the work of symbolic realism is not that he is the first to point out the deficiencies in the planetary model. Symbolic realism has its roots in recognizing the "reductionism" involved in the attempts to explain symbols by means of one particular mode. It insists that the symbol itself is what establishes "reality." What Erikson contributes is a well-developed model for how the symbol is related to the great variety of life processes from which it draws strength and to which it gives strength. Only some rich galactic model which calls for a significant involvement by all aspects of the life process such as Erikson's does will be adequate for relating the symbol to all the vital elements of life. Moreover, in this study the nature of the connection between the symbol and those life processes has been not merely a matter of proximity but of mutual recognition.[2] Those connections are established where a spark has been struck when the symbol has made contact with the vital elements of life. In that contact new energy and new possibilities were evoked for both the symbol and those elements. This dynamic of mutual activation is supported by the dynamic of transformational emergence which brings all these aspects together in an intense convergence which both depends on all of them and also transforms them.

One effect of this relativity is that it extends the dimensions of multivalence which are so fundamental to a symbol. Ricoeur, in his treatment of Freud, pointed out that symbols include not only an archeology but also a teleology.[1] Erikson doubles the dimensions once more. If archeology and teleology are set on the same continuum, as Ricoeur proposes, that may be called a "longitudinal" dimension.[2] What Erikson adds is a "horizontal" dimension because the full action of relativity which he proposes does not only reach backward and forward but also outward to a great variety of aspects of the human experience -- social, historical, ideological, ethical, interpersonal, rational, etc.[3] Ricoeur, of course, had no intention of excluding all of these elements, but neither did he take the next step of demonstrating how they are vitally included in the total interaction.

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[1] Ibid., p. 43.

[2] Above, pp. 211-220.

If Erikson is not the first to point beyond a Copernican model of interaction, neither is he the first to propose a model of relativity for understanding human experience. However, his proposal for relativity is more than a negative shedding of the old orthodoxies which confined men's perspectives. One of the problems which haunts relativity is that it provides man with no solid place to stand.[4] Therefore, while the philosopher spins out his theories of relativity, the real world where men live pays little attention because there men insist on having a firm base for life. Erikson offers a web of relations of sufficient density to provide man with the necessary stability for orienting himself in the world. This is a crucial aspect of his contribution to a dynamics of relativity. It is also important for Erikson's support of pluralism and is to be discussed in greater detail in the section which immediately follows.

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[1] Above, Chapter III.

[2] Above, p. 140.

[3] Above, p. 123.

[4] Bertrand Russell's graphic description of infinitesimal man in the great universe of relativity is one example of the bleakness and insignificance to which man is often relegated by such attempts. See his essay on "Dreams and Facts," Sceptical Essays (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1928), p. 31.

4. Provides an adequate basis for pluralism

One of the aspects of symbolic realism which appeals most to me is the promise it holds for dealing more adequately with the pluralistic character of human life on the globe. If reality is constituted by the symbolic configuration which orients a man in the world, that establishes a workable basis for understanding that societies with different configurations will perceive different realities.

Erikson's studies of two Indian tribes with remarkably contrasting perspectives (the Sioux and the Yurok) indicated to me from the beginning that his work would be likely to give some insight in regard to pluralism. Later I found explicit references in Erikson's work to the potentiality for the person when he is born to fit into any one of a number of cultural identities.[1]

However, the problem is not as easy as that. There must be more than a gratuitous acknowledgement that there is a variety of cultures. Each one is real and serious for the people who are in it. Most of them are inclined to assume that everyone in the world, if he is to become the best he can be, should adopt the style of his particular culture. If that is not the case, they wonder how the perceptions and values according to which they live their own lives can be genuine. Their own beliefs, they insist, are not mere whim or taste which may be true for some but not for others. They are true.

For this reason, it is important to go further with Erikson and recognize the solid grounding which he establishes for each world-image. It is especially the dynamic of transformational emergence which demonstrates

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[1] Erikson, ORM, p. 340; Erikson, IYC, p. 298.

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how all the elements involved in symbolic formation converge for a critical time until a sound configuration emerges. They are compressed into a density which promotes intense and vital interaction among all the elements in order to establish a configuration adequate enough to give new energy to the situation.

When a symbolic configuration develops out of the reciprocal stimulation of all those elements of life which Erikson includes in the process, it is a well-rooted world-image which indeed establishes the reality of those who are involved in the process. The configuration has been shaped in this way and not in any other. This is the way that life is. The serious process which has brought the configuration into actuality cannot be undone.

This world-image has been established not only by one generation's total life of interaction but by a "cycle of generations," the interaction between generations time after time. No world-image would have sufficient density if it did not have also this dimension of interaction and depth.[1]

This careful attention to the importance of rootedness is highlighted in Erikson's essay on "Identity and Uprootedness in our Time."[2] There he makes it clear that without adequate roots man cannot locate himself effectively in the world.

If one crucial function of a symbol is to orient man in the world,[3] then Erikson has provided a basis for that orientation which includes not only the in illo tempore of Eliade but also the powerful dynamics of historical life and so extends the foundation by which man finds his way through life.

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[1] The one other dynamic considered for this dissertation is Erikson's frequent reference to the interaction between generations. This plays an important role in making it possible for the various strengths to emerge during the life cycle. It would also have fit the sequence very well -- the dynamics of the cycle of generations. However, Erikson nowhere offers a rich enough texture of interaction between the generations to provide the basis for a dynamics which would significantly add to what has already been included here.

[2] Erikson, IR, pp. 81-108.

[3] Above, Chapter II.

In fact, Erikson establishes such a solid base for these world-images that I encountered quite a different problem during these investigations. Eager as he is to see a more inclusive identity which includes the whole species, Erikson recognizes that the world-images already established are so entrenched that the identity of one mankind will not easily develop. However, Erikson does not handle this by slapping people on the wrist for their narrow-minded ethno-centrism. He recognizes that this pseudo-speciation, dangerous as it is, is rooted in man's need to have deep roots so that he can stand tall. Sometimes, he seems almost ready to resign himself to the inevitability that men must feel that their particular way of being human is the one way for all. That is how deeply man's world images are rooted, in Erikson's view. These are the realities which establish men's lives.

Once again, the second movement in the life cycle becomes the critical one. As long as identity formation is the only model for the formation of the symbolic configuration, it continually moves toward deeper entrenchment and more clearly defined borders between who is in and who is out. However, the configuration is a lifelong one which moves beyond the crisis of identity and on to maturity. Thus, a symbol has within its dynamics also this movement of opening up. It is a movement which makes it possible to see beyond its own borders, to transcend its preoccupation with survival.[1] The mature person who has reached the stage of integrity is able to recognize the relativity of all world-images, including his own, and yet to hold his own with dignity and gratitude,[1] recognizing that this was the life cycle which was appropriately his. Likewise, a world-image which is well-anchored and which functions with adequate multivalence allows those for whom it is significant sufficient freedom to acknowledge alternative styles of life without denying the integrity and strength of their own. Erikson suggests that the interaction between such mature world-images can result in the same heightened activation for all of them as is experienced on other levels of mutual recognition.[2] This opens the way to a pluralistic world where there is mutual respect and where there is still sufficient stability for each of a wide variety of world-images to provide a significant life-orientation for the people who live within them.

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[1] Erikson, IYC, p. 42.

B. Problems Encountered in the Study

1. Is religion genuinely integrated?

The integration of the various elements of human experience into the total life process is one of the most significant contributions made by Erikson. The elements of societal patterns and institutions and of historical change are, in Erikson's model, integrally bound up with the psychological and physiological aspects of life.

Religion, too, is included in this process of mutual activation among all these elements. In the first place, it has something distinctive to bring to the life process. Erikson recognizes that religious life has its unique functions just as social life, biological life, and psychological life. Religious experience and symbolization deals with the existential aspect of life,[1] one in which a man must face his own death and somehow see life in relation to it.[2] The integration which religion requires is one in which death is incorporated as an "intrinsic part of a boundless and recreative life."[3] This is especially evident in the lives of homo religiosus, the religiously creative person who is ready to die for what is "true" in order to grasp life more fully,[4] but it is also present in the life of every person because "deep down" all people need to understand their lives as those who have always lived in the past and always will in the future.[5]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 140.

[2] Erikson, IR, p. 242.

Religion, while it is this distinctive dimension of life, is still intimately associated with other dimensions and draws from them in the dynamic of mutual activation. No ritual can be effective unless it resonates in the psychosocial processes of life.[6]

Religious life is firmly grounded in the first and fundamental stage of the epigenetic life cycle, the stage of basic trust/mistrust.[7] It is a reaffirmation of the "maternal matrix,"[8] solidly grounded in what is way back behind all the other developments of life, at the beginning.[9]

When such trust is directed toward a god who is primarily a male figure, it cannot be separated from the person's relationship with his biological father.[1] Certainly Erikson's study of Luther confirms this because the struggle in his relationship with his father Hans is intimately connected with his belief in the Father.[2]

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[1] Erikson, "Identity," Encyclopedia, p. 62.

[2] Erikson, YML, p. 177; "Autobiographic Notes on the Identity Crisis," p. 757.

[3] Erikson, GT, p. 400.

[4] Ibid., p. 399.

[5] Ibid., p. 36.

[6] Erikson, YML, p. 209.

[7] Erikson, IYC, p. 106.

[8] Erikson, YML, p. 141.

[9] Erikson, YML, p. 119.

All-caring gods are rooted in man's need to be taken care of and to have some guidance for man when he realizes that he is involved in creating conditions which are out of his control.[3] Man's psychological need for being in the center of his universe is related to his worship of all-knowing gods,[4] and his need for a sense of mastery or control is associated with his worship of omnipotent deities.[5]

The particular socio-cultural milieu in which a person lives will also contribute to this religious dimension. The divine figure[6] as well as demonic figures[7] are represented in different ways in different eras. No religion is isolated from such psychohistorical processes.

However, the activation is genuinely mutual, going both ways. Religious symbols may be described as projections of man's physiological and psychological requirements, and they may be shaped by the forces of history and culture, but religion activates those elements in return. It catches up the images from the other elements and gives them new amplification, clarification, and power.[1] It was out of such religious symbolization that Luther's crisis of identity was resolved. As long as he was projecting the image of a dreaded and untrustworthy father onto the Father in heaven, his crisis was magnified.[2] However, when the religious symbol of Christ as the Father's Son opened up to him so powerfully that it became the core of his own identity, the possibility of an adequate identity configuration emerged to offer a resolution to the crisis.[3] This religious breakthrough meant not the surrender of Luther's personal identity but the discovery of it.[4] It is a specific instance of the way that the religious aspect of life contributes to the integrative and healing process of life.[5]

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[1] "Mankind's Maker is first experienced in the infantile image of each man's maker." Erikson, GT, p. 129.

[2] Erikson, YML, pp. 149, 154, and 165.

[3] Erikson, IR, p. 131.

[4] Ibid., p. 149.

[5] Erikson, "Identity," Encyclopedia, p. 62.

[6] Erikson, YML, p. 177.

[7] Ibid., p. 249.

In these ways Erikson demonstrates to my satisfaction that the religious dimension of life is included in the full dynamics of mutual activation with all the other elements of life. Religious symbolization accrues through the cycle of generations. There are those stages or crises when many elements are compressed together, creating the occasion out of which a transformed configuration may arise with new power and new possibilities for integration. The dynamics allow room both for the sense that grace is a gift, offered to man from powers outside his control and also for the sense that faith is an affirmation made freely by the person in response to that gift. The role of the community of faith for this process is also very clear. In my judgment Erikson has achieved a great breakthrough to our understanding of the dynamics of the formation also of religious symbols and their contribution, in turn, to all other elements of life.

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[1] Erikson, YML, p. 264.

[2] _Ibid._, p. 165.

[3] _Ibid._, pp. 212 and 214.

[4] _Ibid._, pp. 206 and 217.

[5] _Ibid._, p. 265.

The problem encountered in my research is that Erikson himself is not willing to be so explicit in making religion an integral part of the process which he describes. What he seems to accomplish in his detailed study of Luther he is not willing to formally declare in his theoretic formulations. Erikson is prepared to announce the mutual activation of the three processes of human experience which are known through psychology, biology, and the social sciences,[1] but he is nowhere prepared to include the process which is studied by means of theology in that same list.

Even in the introduction to his work on Luther he makes a sharp distinction between psychology, which deals with what is demonstrable, and religion, which expresses what is "profoundly true" about the darkness and light in which man is immersed but is not demonstrable.[2] He declares himself willing to deal with theological matters only in so far as they are accessible by psychoanalytic investigation.[3]

When it comes to formulating just what the relation of religion is to the psychosocial process of identity formation, Erikson resorts to proposing a parallel process of identity formation which lies behind the one with which he is dealing.[4] It is as though he puts religious development into a realm all its own with only analogous parallels connecting it and the psychosocial process.

This proposal is supported by Erikson's distinction between the ego and the "I." The ego is the almost entirely unconscious process which leads to a person's psychosocial identity. "I," by contrast, is the center of consciousness, of self-awareness.[1] It "transcends" the psychosocial crisis of adolescence because its peculiar level of interaction and alienation functions in relation to the "dread of his individual existence bounded by death."[2] The counterplayer on this level of activation, according to Erikson, is not the id or the superego or the social environment but the deity.

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[1] Erikson, CS, p. 37.

[2] Erikson, YML, p. 21.

[3] Erikson, "Identity," Encyclopedia, p. 62.

[4] Erikson, "Autobiographic Notes on the Identity Crisis," pp. 757 and 758.

> The counterplayer of the 'I' therefore can be, strictly speaking, only the deity who has lent this halo [the self-awareness of 'I' -hood] to a mortal and is Himself endowed with an eternal numinousness certified by all 'I's who acknowledge this gift.[3]

The religious realm of "I"s and gods and existential dread of death has been relegated to another realm of interaction. In these theoretic constructions Erikson seems to have again raised barriers of separation which his other work had once broken through.

Why should Erikson be reluctant to formally include the religious dimension in one total process of configurational development? It is my conjecture that Erikson is himself a man haunted by the religious dimensions of life. His colleague, Joseph Wheelwright, may be correct in concluding that Erikson "never had the luxury of believing; that's why he is concerned with identity."[4] He grew up in a home with a Protestant mother and a Jewish stepfather, a "Jew" in the neighborhood and a "goy" in the family relationship.[5] Moreover, he had plenty of evidence of the manipulative and oppressive elements in religious symbols and institutions.[1]

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[1] Erikson, IYC, pp. 218 and 220.

[2] Erikson, "Autobiographic Notes on the Identity Crisis," p. 757.

[3] Erikson, IYC, p. 220.

[4] "Erik Erikson: The Quest for Identity," Newsweek, December 21, 1970, p. 88.

[5] "Autobiographic Notes on the Identity Crisis," p. 743.

Nevertheless, there are clues throughout his work that he is haunted by the Divine. He selected two explicitly religious personalities for his major study. He taunts the American construction of a god after its own technological image, one who above all would never blunder, and then fully expects that god to step aside in favor of man.[2] He wonders about the arrogance of psychoanalysis in explaining God away,[3] and announces his own opinion that "religion is not so fragile that it needs sanction from therapists and professors."[4]

When commenting on man's sense of his own mortality, Erikson indicated that he had "no brief answer to the question of what this has to do with religion."[5] No brief answer indeed, but a lifetime of wrestling across the Jabbok.[6] It may well be a dimension so close to his own sensibilities that it could only be a travesty to locate it among "demonstrable" processes subject to analysis and manipulation.

Erikson himself has now reached the final stage of his own life cycle -- the stage of integrity. It is the age of wisdom when the existential dimension presses acutely for recognition and "ultimate concerns" are foremost.[7] Perhaps the rumor is true that he is even now working out the implications of his insights for religious experience. That would be a fitting capstone for his life task.

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[1] Erikson, IR, p. 153.

[2] Erikson, IYC, p. 40; "Dimensions of the New Identity," II, 6.

[3] "Autobiographic Notes on the Identity Crisis," p. 757.

[4] Godkin Lectures, II, 369.

[5] "Erik Erikson: The Quest for Identity," p. 89.

[6] Gen. 32:22-32.

[7] Erikson, IYC, p. 140.

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The necessity of going beyond Erikson in the formulation of this dissertation has introduced some resources which promise a more adequate theoretic structure for integrating religious symbols into the process of humanization.

Religious symbols are certainly to be included in the understanding of symbols which has been used here. When, from the very beginning,[1] symbols were defined as "cultural objects," that interpretation of symbols would certainly include religious symbols. Two characteristics of such cultural symbols are that they are public objects and that they are held self-consciously rather than in a hidden and unconscious way. Surely religious symbols are not private affairs but are held in a community of the faithful, and on the second matter of self-consciousness Erikson himself confirms the importance of this in religious symbols when he emphasizes that "self-awareness" is a basic characteristic of the "I" when it functions as counterplayer to the deity.[2]

Furthermore, the three chief functions of symbols as outlined in the first three chapters of the dissertation are all crucial functions of religious symbols. They give form to human experience.[3] They serve to orient man in the world.[4] They also function multivalently.[5] Moreover, of all the symbols, religious symbols probably exemplify these functions with a higher degree of amplitude than any other type of symbols. There is no doubt that religious symbols are included in the understanding of symbols as it has been used throughout this dissertation.

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[1] Above, p. 5.

[2] Above, p. 387.

[3] Above, Chapter I, especially Figure 1 on page 31.

[4] Above, Chapter II, especially pp. 51 and 61.

[5] Above, Chapter III, especially pp. 64-66.

As a result, the two ways in which symbols have been portrayed here as participating in the total life processes would also apply to religious symbols. On the one hand, symbols emerge out of a critical interaction with all the vital elements of life.[1] The implications of this for religious symbols is that they, too, draw on those primordial wells of physiological drives, primary personal relationships, social dynamics, and historical processes. The instance of "justification by faith" serves as a case in point. On the other hand, symbols have been treated in this dissertation not only as the end-products of an interaction among those elements but also as a significant participant with all of them in the total life process.[2] Symbols are activating the other dimensions of life even as they are being activated by them. Once again, religious symbols are included in this interaction.

All of this, however, still does not take into account the specific characteristics of religious symbols and the particular set of problems which they present. Religious symbols, first, are integrative on the most fundamental level of life. Symbols which function on such an inclusive level that they offer an integration for the totality of human experience with a sense of wholeness are religious symbols.[3] They function in Tillich's phrase, on that level of experience at which the person is "ultimately

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[1] Above, pp. 270-273 and 300-303.

[2] Above, pp. 168-171, 237, and 238.

[3] Bellah, Beyond Belief, p. 244.

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concerned."[1]

A second characteristic of religious symbols is that they deal with the transcendent dimension of life.[2] They are related to the mystery which surrounds all of human experience. To "explain" such a symbol of transcendence in terms of an immediate, every-day referent is to reduce it beyond recognition.

Finally, people whose lives are oriented by a religious symbolic configuration regard that set of symbols as something which has been revealed and not as something which they have produced. Man does not create his own religious symbols.[3] He has a sense that they have been bestowed by a gift of grace.

Erikson himself describes these same qualities of religion in an eloquent passage in the introduction to Young Man Luther:

> Religion . . . elaborates on what feels profoundly true even though it is not demonstrable; it translates into significant words, images, and codes the exceeding darkness which surrounds man's existence, and the light which pervades it beyond all desert or comprehension.[4]

Erikson, however, was reluctant to include such dimensions in his study of Luther and confined himself to a more manageable interpretation of religion -- religion as ideology.[5] Or did he? If ideology is understood in the fullest sense as a cultural symbol with the full range of resonance described in this dissertation, then it may not be such a reduced level of the religious experience at all.

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[1] Tillich, "The Religious Symbol," in Symbolism in Religion and Literature, edited by Rollo May (New York: George Braziller, 1960), p. 77.

[2] Jean Danielou, The Lord of History (London: Longmans Green, 1958), p. 133.

[3] Tillich, Dynamics of Faith, p. 43.

[4] Erikson, YML, pp. 21 and 22.

[5] Ibid., p. 22.

Those unique characteristics of religious symbols just described (including ideology in the broad sense in which Erikson uses it in his study of Luther) are actually the characteristics of all symbols carried to a higher amplitude.

No image is a symbol unless it offers an integration of at least some aspect of human experience. It is the business of symbols to make such connections. Some symbols may do that on a very low level of amplitude so that only a small segment of experience is drawn together. They function adequately for a limited range of relationships. More important symbols, however, have their roots sunk into the deeper levels of life and reach out to higher and wider ranges of the total human experience. Those symbols which extend this amplitude to touch the widest range of life and which provide the most inclusive type of integration become what ultimately concerns the person. They resonate with the most elemental aspects of life, often being associated with blood, fertility, eating, and power,[1] and they point as well to what lies beyond immediate human experience.

Transcendence, similarly, is an aspect of every symbol. That is, every symbol transcends the ordinary realm of everyday life to open new dimensions to it. Its multivalence carries it beyond the immediate situation. Then, too, every symbol is transcendent in the sense that it resonates with its unique quality in a person's experience so that it cannot be fully defined in terms other than its own form. It is at the edge of knowing and transcends every specific perception because it participates in shaping perception. The quality of multivalence means that while a symbol has a concrete form, the levels at which it resonates cannot be defined or circumscribed. An image which is multivalent always has the possibility of breaking out into

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[1] van der Leeuw, Religion in Essence and Manifestation, pp. 23-28.

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new territories not recognized beforehand. It is open-ended. Therefore, those symbols which reverberate on the highest levels of amplitude reach out beyond man's capacity to grasp into realms which can be sensed but not controlled, where it is more appropriate to gaze in awe than to squint in analysis.

On this matter of transcendence an interesting extension of Erikson's epigenetic stages can be developed. In his essay on "Human Strength and the Cycle of Generations"[1] Erikson demonstrates how each epigenetic stage is the source for a specific human virtue or strength. It is possible, similarly, to trace the relationship of each stage to an aspect of transcendence. Erikson himself suggests this possibility when he repeatedly refers to the numinous quality which is associated so intimately with the first stage.[2] He also recognizes the association between this stage of Hope and the transcendent images of heaven.[3]

Although Erikson views this first stage as having particularly strong ties to the religious dimension of human experience, the other stages also suggest transcendent possibilities when the range of their multivalence is extended. The second stage with its crisis of autonomy of one's own will in relation to the controlling forces which surround the individual is amplified in religious symbolic configurations into transcendent levels in the Hindu daiva, the Moslem Kismet, and the Christian "Will of God." The third stage of conscience and purpose ultimately points to a transcendent judgment, the stage of competence to perfection, the stage of identity to the mystical vision of the divine One, intimacy to communion, generativity to the outpouring of the Spirit on all flesh, and the maturity of old age at the boundary of death to eternity.

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[1] Erikson, IR, pp. 111-157.

[2] Erikson, ORM, pp. 339, 344, and 347.

[3] Erikson, IR, p. 118.

"The power and the glory" of religious symbols is that they resonate out to levels of amplitude which is beyond the access of empirical verification. To claim that they are not "real" because they cannot be confined to such laboratory testing is a confusion of symbolic "universes." A point made consistently throughout this paper is that one symbol cannot be judged in terms of another symbol without doing violence to its unique character. Symbols with higher levels of amplitude are likely to be less precise but more powerfully gripping for the human spirit. On the other hand, as Graham Greene has demonstrated to us,[1] it does not destroy the vigor of these symbols to see how they are rooted in the "low and despised of the earth."[2] On the basis of the work in this dissertation it would be expected that only those symbols which are rooted in elemental forces of human experience are likely to exercise sufficient multivalence to resonate into the farther reaches of the human spirit.

However, when the symbols of transcendence are incorporated into the dynamics of humanization in these terms, does this approach not deny the universal experience of the faithful of all religions that these symbols have been "revealed" or "received as a gift"? Does the dynamics just described not make the symbols of transcendence mere "projections" of mundane experience, sublimations of the elemental forces? What about this third distinctive quality of religious symbols?

To some extent, this is a quality of all symbols. No symbol is manufactured. Considerable space has already been devoted to this aspect of symbolic formation to make that clear.[1] The sheer weight of the multiplicity of forces which converge in the formation of a symbol make it impossible for anyone to say that he "invented" it. Yet, according to the dynamics proposed here[2] a symbol is not merely the inevitable results of a complex mixture of life's vital elements. There is also a process of synthesis in which an image emerges which rings with sufficient fidelity at enough points to stimulate mutual activation both for the symbolic image and for the elements it touches.

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[1] Graham Greene, The Power and the Glory (New York: Viking Press, 1962.

[2] 1 Cor. 1:28.

Where does that image come from? It is always related, in a process similar to identification,[3] to one that has been previously known. Without such "recognition" it would lack the necessary attention for gaining some ascendancy. Yet, it also has its unique character, not quite like anything known before. Those to whom those new symbolic configurations occur all have a sense that they received them as a gift. Nietzsche and Luther and Paul are agreed on this.[4]

There is, evidently, a teleological, integrative, forward-pulling force which is at work in all symbolic formation. It is not foreign to human experience. Erikson sees it at work when he describes the search for identity as one of the elemental drives of human development. Yet, it also remains as a mysterious and elusive aspect of the process.[5] It is particularly strong on the higher levels of symbolic amplitude -- in art and religion.[6]

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[1] Above, pp. 274-288.

[2] Above, Chapter VII.

[3] Above, p. 263.

[4] Above, p. 259.

[5] Above, p. 288.

[6] Brewster Ghisálen, The Creative Process (New York: The New American Library, 1952).

In the specific instance of Erikson's model, there is an interesting parallel between his first and fifth epigenetic stages and the theological descriptions of grace and faith. In the first stage of life, the one he relates particularly to religion, the infant receives life as a gift. He is loved and cared for. Life is grace. In the fifth stage he affirms his own identity, as it were, in response to that gift. It is his affirmation of faith. The first is the time of baptism, the fifth is the time of confirmation. It is in these complementary aspects of life that religion is experienced and also in them that religious symbols function.

Some progress, then, has been made in this dissertation by going beyond Erikson to incorporate symbols into the dynamic interaction of the life process. Religious symbols, it appears, can be included in this interaction both as the products of the interaction and as participants and vital contributors to it. It should not be necessary, then,to posit a separate realm of religious experience and symbolization, one which runs parallel to the psychosocial development of people. Rather, religious symbols with their high level of amplitude and powerful possibilities for integration and orientation have important contributions to make to the total psychosocial process and, in turn, need to be rooted in that process if they are to maintain the vitality required for their effectiveness.

2. Is the Protean Man a possibility?

One of the interesting directions to which Erikson pointed was toward a more flexible pattern of human development. His rejection of the Freudian determinism which he labelled "originology," his insistence that man is capable of developing in many different directions, and the diverse array of resources which he includes in the process of identity formation all increase the range of possibilities for what a man may become and suggest the image of the Protean Man.

Not Erikson but Robert Jay Lifton formulated the notion of the Protean Man[1] in the context of psychosocial development. Lifton states that whereas formerly it was not likely that there would be more than one ideological shift during a person's lifetime, today such shifts are made much more easily and more frequently -- painlessly within a year, or even a month.[2] He cites the specific example of a young Japanese man who by the age of 25 had gone through eleven transformations.[3]

Alvin Toffler picks up the theme in his anticipation of a future where people will have to cope with increasingly rapid changes. They will have to be more adaptable themselves in order to survive in that kind of world.[4] It is in such a world of continual metamorphosis that young people are advised to "travel light," both in terms of their possessions and also in terms of any long-range involvements.[5]

Jacob Horner, the narrator in John Barth's novel, The End of the Road, is a fictional portrayal of the Protean Man. He shifts quickly from one mood to another, one relationship to another, without allowing himself to be confined to any one mold. He does not want to foreclose his options.[6] Erikson had observed already in his first book that a characteristic of the American identity is that Americans were eager to keep their options open.[1] In his latest lecture he picks up the Protean Man terminology in describing Thomas Jefferson and concludes that it is this quality of Jefferson's which makes him "so intensely American."[2]

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[1] Robert Jay Lifton, "Protean Man," Partisan Review, Winter, 1968, pp. 13-27.

[2] Ibid., p. 21.

[3] Ibid., pp. 14 and 15.

[4] Alvin Toffler, Future Shock (New York: Random House, 1970), pp. 316-321.

[5] John Coyne and Tom Hebert, This Way Out (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1972), pp. 107 and 119.

[6] John Barth, The End of the Road (New York: Bantam Books, 1969).

Yet, Jacob Horner's "mood swings" result in the death of a woman, and Toffler wonders how far it is possible to accelerate the rate of change before pushing man's capacity to change beyond his ability to endure.[3]

That is one of the tough questions with which man is faced today. To what extent is it possible for a person to undergo continual and fundamental change and still survive? An answer to that question is still left unresolved by this study -- and also by Erikson, I believe.

Although it was Erikson's proposals which suggested the image of the Protean Man to Lifton, Erikson himself has never been an advocate of this application of his work. In fact, he has always been keenly aware that a number of his patients have suffered ego impairment just because too many changes came too quickly.[4] He seems to have been particularly conscious of that when he served as a therapist to veterans at Mt. Zion Hospital in San Francisco.[5]

However, Erikson comes down hardest on the image of the Protean Man in his Jefferson lectures. There he points out that Proteus himself had one fundamental shape to which he continually returned and that the others were

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[1] Erikson, CS, p. 286.

[2] Erikson, "Dimensions of the New Identity," I, 17 and 19.

[3] Toffler, Future Shock, p. 486.

[4] Erikson, IYC, p. 56.

[5] Ibid., p. 67; Erik Erikson, "Plans for the Returning Veteran," Community Planning for Peacetime Living, ed. Louis Wirth, Ernest R. Hilgard, I. James Quillen (Palo Alto, California: Stanford University Press, 1945), p. 116.

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not the "real" Proteus. They were possible because he had a basic identity to work out of. The myth ends with Proteus being forced to confine himself to his genuine identity.[1]

This is consistent with the dynamics of identity formation which he developed. Erikson describes it as a movement toward a definite configuration. Many roles and identifications may be drawn into that process and many alternatives considered and even tried out tentatively, but the total movement is toward a synthesis into one strong image which is to last for a lifetime. If the crisis is not adequately resolved, then the stage concludes with a degree of identity confusion, and the crippling effect of that difficulty will also be felt the rest of his life.

Surely there is the other movement after identity formation. The configuration is open-ended and subject to adaptation, but the central core retains sufficient stability to make such changes possible.

Therefore, Erikson would be likely to offer another interpretation to the protean quality of Lifton's Japanese young man. He would look for a fundamental continuity underlying that complex development. Some of the "identities" Erikson would regard as ideologies tried on for size during a time of moratorium. Others would most likely be regarded as variations on a fundamental theme. Erikson insists that the person who has a sound basic identity configuration is capable of a great many adjustments,[2] and that is different from a succession of different identities.

Erikson offers a healthy corrective to the chameleon-like man which Lifton proposes. However, I am not inclined to think that the matter can be left to rest at that. We are already in the midst of an era which makes great demands for frequent change in the lives of men. Erikson raises important cautions about the dangers connected with such change, but we also need to explore with some degree of urgency whether man is limited to one significant crisis of identity formation or whether other fundamental changes may be possible. It is possible, for example, that the satisfactory resolution of one identity crisis can provide some experience and confidence in approaching another one, perhaps with less trauma. College students are less interested in Erikson's projects than they were a decade ago. They have the feeling that a preoccupation with identity will close their options too early. They would like to be more protean in their approach to life. Are they only asking for an extended moratorium, or are they reaching beyond Erikson's model of identity formation? I suspect that the latter is closer to the truth, and this study does not offer an adequate response to that line of inquiry.

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[1] "Dimensions of the New Identity, II, 15; There is only a brief allusion to Protean Man in the draft manuscript. In the address as it was delivered, however, Erikson appeals to the original myth in considerable detail to make this point.

[2] Erikson, IR, p. 96.

C. Promising Areas for Further Research

A myriad of possibilities for further research is suggested by the line of inquiry pursued in this dissertation.

1. Contributions to be extended

The contributions made by this study as summarized earlier in this Conclusion have significance in large measure because of the promise they hold for future investigation. The possibilities which this study offers to understanding a pluralistic world is one example. The basis on which man can move beyond pseudo-speciation could be pursued in personal, religious, and political terms. It colors the way that theology is done. Theologians may look at the physiological, social, political, economic, and historical

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resources for the symbolic configuration of a particular religion not to "explain away" the power of the symbol but to understand the breadth and depth of its power. At the same time that they establish a more adequate base for such a symbolic configuration they may be able to acknowledge that it is not the one authentic style of humanization to be imposed on all others. It may assist theologians in recognizing in a fresh way that only God is God, to express it theologically, and that any human expression of truth is partial and relative, not universal.

Relativity is another such area toward which this study has already made some contribution and which deserves considerably more attention. Since each symbolic configuration emerges from an interaction among forces none of which is seen as taking priority over the others, it must carry its own power of self-validation. This makes the way it "fits" or "rings true" in relation to all those elements, the key to its strength and authenticity. It would be fascinating to explore in further detail what makes for such fittedness and fidelity.

2. Problems to be surmounted

Even those areas listed above as "problems" offer promise for further study. The difficulties encountered in them were not so much dead-ends as limitations for this particular project. This study, as well as the total resources of Erikson's work, provides the basis for a profitable inquiry both into a more adequate way of including religion in the theoretic structure of dynamic interaction and also into the extent of man's potential as a protean creature.

3. Parallel approaches to be explored

An entirely different area of research is suggested by the purpose behind this dissertation. It has attempted to shed some light on the dynamics by which symbols are formed by analyzing the work of a psychoanalyst. As this study itself suggests, these dynamics are too intricate to be uncovered by a single approach. Parallel investigations from entirely different fields would offer interesting alternatives and create a lively arena for interplay among the various proposals. Some promising fields have already been suggested. Robert Bellah points to the dynamics of small group interaction as one likely approach.[1] Game theory and play theory have been proposed as others.[2]

The field of aesthetic creativity is one which looks particularly promising and is of special interest to me for future research. R. G. Collingwood's proposals regarding the elemental role of imagination in human existence[3] and Jose Ortega y Gasset's sense of the fundamental importance of imagination for keeping life human offer suggestive starting points.[4] I can already visualize the interplay between this approach and the present study of Erikson. This analysis of Erikson suggests rich sources and a dynamic milieu for the functioning of the imagination, and the synthesizing function of the ego process offers some tantalizing suggestions for the dynamics of imagination.

Yet one more field which may have some interesting contributions to make to this process of symbolic formation is that of brain and neural physiology. The work of J. Y. Lettvin of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

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[1] Philip Slater, Microcosm (New York: John Wiley, 1966), cited by Bellah in Beyond Belief, p. 13.

[2] Kliever, op. cit., p. 102.

[3] Collingwood, The Principles of Art.

[4] Jose Ortega y Gasset, The Interpretation of Universal History, trans. Mildred Adams (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1973); this book is the translation of lectures given in Spain in 1948 and 1949 by Ortega y Gasset after a ten-year self-imposed exile.

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deals with "What the Frog's Eye Tells the Frog's Brain." This research deals with such matters as how the gestalt of a silhouette is perceived and how the level of illumination and the outline of the figure are coordinated.[1]

Still in the area of physiology is the work being done on the distinctive functions for each hemisphere of the brain -- the right hemisphere contributing the more imaginative and intuitive functions while the left hemisphere conducts the more rationally organized functions.[2] Work is being done on this subject in such places as the California Institute of Technology (Roger Sperry), the University of California Medical Center in San Francisco (Robert Ornstein), and the National Institute of Mental Health (Josephine Semmes).

4. Philosophical basis to be supported

Underlying all this research on how symbols are formed lies a philosophical investigation which is crucial for symbolic realism. It is suggested by the work of Cassirer and Ricoeur as reviewed in Part One of this dissertation. Cassirer emphasizes that man's perspective on the world is not developed by drawing on a large number of discrete observations (data) and then arranging them in some way which makes sense. Instead, the form-giving function operates on a more primitive level so that it establishes what will be called "data." "Facts" are already an advanced level of differentiation made possible by the symbolic forms.[3]

In parallel fashion Ricoeur points out in his study of Freud how even instincts, the most fundamental level of human experience for Freud, can be expressed only through symbolic representation.[1] The symbolic configuration, accordingly, is the basis for all human knowing and experience.

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[1] J. Y. Lettvin, H. R. Maturana, W. H. Pitts, and W. S. McCulloch, "Two Remarks on the Visual System of the Frog" in Sensory Communication, ed. Walter Rosenblith (Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1964), pp. 757-776.

[2] Robert E. Ornstein, The Psychology of Consciousness (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman, 1972).

[3] Above, p. 23.

Even with that base as the beginning of this study, I found myself semantically "required" to fall back on such terms of "elements" and "forces" in describing the resources which give shape to a symbolic configuration. To use such terminology is to indicate that such things "precede" the formation of the symbol, which contradicts the philosophic basis of symbolic realism.

A promising area for further study would be to inquire into how symbolic realism can be more consistent in its language. It would mean that even Alfred Schutz's realm of "everyday life" can only be experienced and expressed within some symbolic form.[2] If this is the case, then does the symbol lose any distinctive meaning because it includes everything? Is it possible that the distinction made in this dissertation between one level of symbolic configurations with a more limited range and a lower amplitude of multivalence and another level of symbolic configurations which are more inclusive with a wider range of resonance might provide the basis for a resolution of this problem?[3] It would be a difficult but important study.

5. Practical applications pursued

Finally, of course, there are the many areas of practical application. In regard to worship and ritual this study points both to significant roots for the symbolic power of such events and also to their role in orienting persons and communities in the world. This would be of help in studies of liturgical reform. In the case of Lutherans, for example, the dynamics of transformational emergence have a direct bearing on the current reforms regarding the rite of confirmation.

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[1] Above, p. 86.

[2] Above, p. 71.

[3] Above, pp. 220, 273,

Applications in the field of education promise to be particularly fruitful. I am especially interested in college-level education. In an experimental humanities program at Wartburg College in which I am participating a number of the directions suggested by this study have already been initiated. These are especially related to the dynamic of transformational emergence and include such elements as: significant exposure to and interaction with alternative symbolic configurations not only by reading but also by personal interaction (independent study and experiential learning), a space (Spielraum) providing a more adequate arena for testing promising configurations without preoccupation with grades, and a residential living-learning structure in which sufficient candor and caring develops to provide the necessary support and confidence for individuals to move toward a synthesis which is appropriate for them.

In the area of religious education of younger children an experiment is already being tried along the lines suggested by the dynamics of mutual activation. It is the "Mission-Life" material published by the Concordia Publishing House.[1] Its methodology presupposes that children capture the sense of a symbolic configuration more by sensing structural similarity (configurational continuity) than by rational explanation.

One further practical extension of this study could be related to the "tell your own story" approach to theology as it is described by Sam

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[1] "Mission-Life" Curriculum (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1972.)

Keen[1] and Michael Novak.[2] This uses the narrative form of a symbolic configuration and has been suggested for use in teaching religion, personal counseling, group work, Biblical research, and preaching. An effective story will draw on the dynamics proposed in this dissertation.

These are more specific studies directly related to the material dealt with in this dissertation. More generally, this project provides a context which offers added interest and richness to almost any study dealing with how man comes to see the world the way he sees it or with an analysis of a particular way of viewing the world.

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[1] Sam Keen, To a Dancing God (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1970).

[2] Michael Novak, Ascent of the Mountain, the Flight of the Dove (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1970).

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